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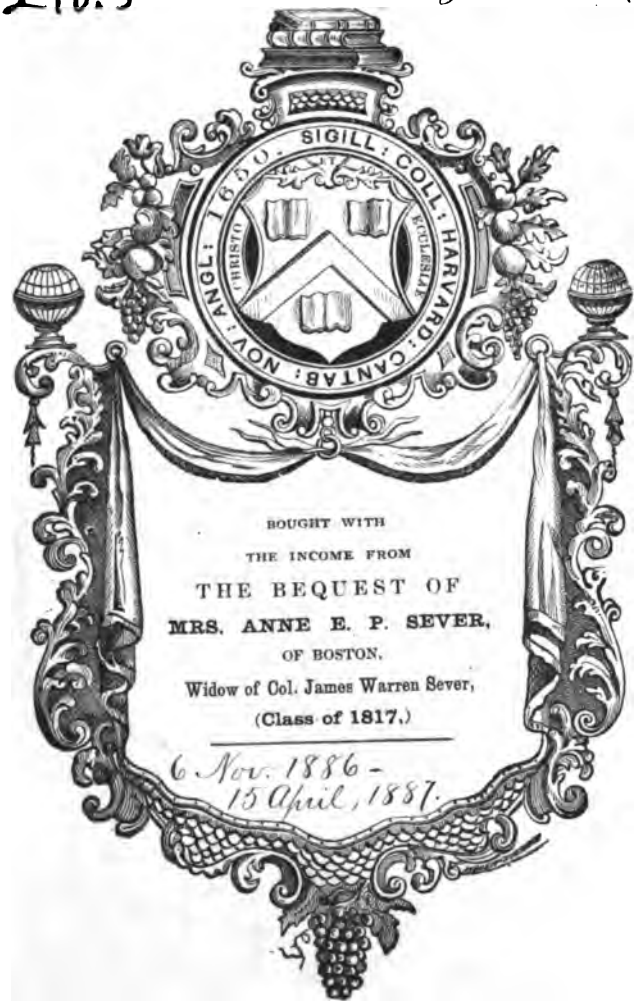

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6 Nov. 1886 -
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No. XLIX.] [NOVEMBER 1886

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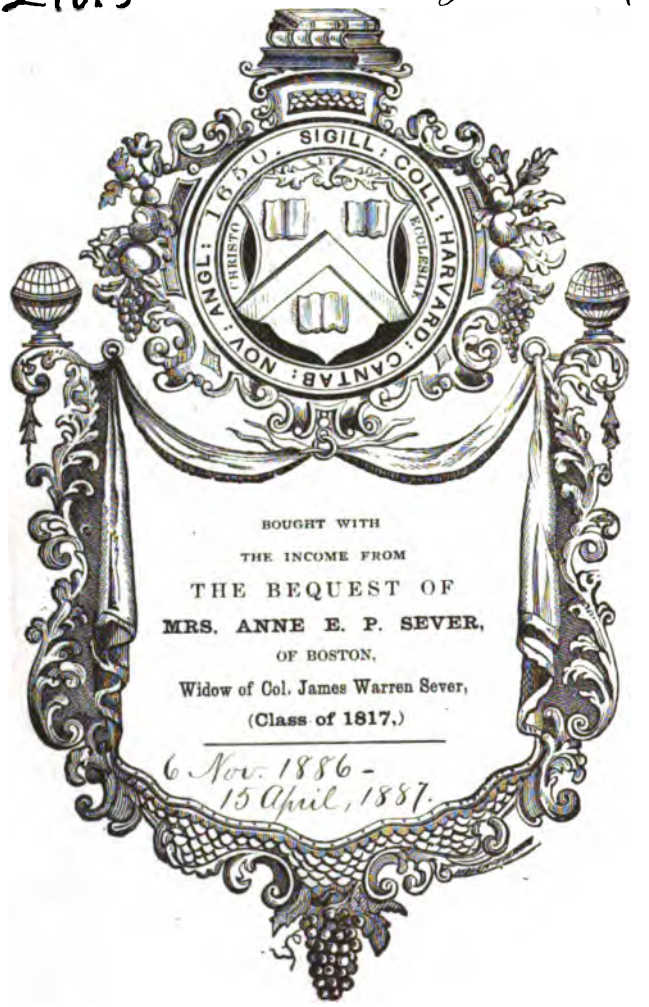

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A WHITE MEDICINE-MAN ON THIRST TRIALS IN MASAI LAND.—'A medicine also had to be prepared for the disease, which I did by laying out a small medicine-box, with the lid open, showing all the array of phials, &c. Taking out my sextant, and putting on a pair of kid gloves—which accidentally I happened to have, and which impressed the natives enormously—I intently examined the contents. Discovering the proper *dawa*, I prepared a mixture, and then getting ready some ENO'S FRUIT SALT, I sang an incantation—generally something about 'Three blue-bottles' —over it. My voice not being astonishingly mellifluous, it did duty capitally for a wizard's. My preparations complete, and Brahim being ready with a gun, I dropped the Salt into the mixture; simultaneously the gun was fired, and, lo! up fizzed and sparkled the carbonic acid, causing the natives to shrink with intense dismay. . . . The chiefs, with fear and trembling, taste as it fizzes away.'—*Through Masai Land.* By JOSEPH THOMSON, F.R.G.S.

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VOL. IX.

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VOL. IX.

NOVEMBER 1886 TO APRIL 1887

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1887

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NOVEMBER 1886.

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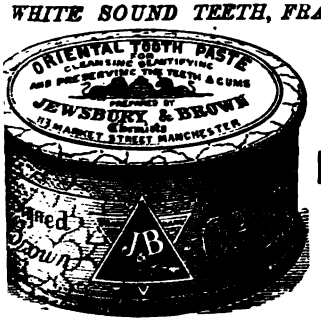

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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

NOVEMBER 1886.

Children of Gibeon.

BY WALTER BESANT.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

RETURN, O SHULAMITE!

SO, at last, dawned the morning of Valentine's last day in Hoxton—the last day comes, if one waits long enough, of everything.

Her last day. She awoke before daybreak, and watched how the dawn—a pretty sight—gradually revealed in all their beauty, the Board School and the back yards and the courts commanded by her window. There were no larks singing in the sky or swallows flying about the eaves to welcome the sun, perhaps because the season was too late for larks and swallows; nor was there any autumnal splendour of wood and coppice for the sun to shine upon and to glorify; but there were cats and there were sparrows—and gradually there arose a murmur of life, and dirty blinds were pulled up or pinned up, and the mortals behind them got themselves dressed in their work-a-day clothes, and the day's labours began. For most of them such dreary, weary, monotonous, and unprofitable labours!

Her last day. She looked round the little cell where she had spent three long summer months, a willing prisoner—and now she loved the place. On her bed lay the sick girl, who had taken so

many nights' rest from her. When first she came there was no sick girl to care for, nor had she any single friend—who now had so many—in the whole place. There were her household gods—all the things which Claude had given her for what she thought would be a three months' picnic, but proved to be the prelude to a lifelong work—they were no longer new; the frying-pan, never very strong—man, mere man, cannot know how to choose a frying-pan—was now battered out of shape; it had fried quantities of chops, steaks, eggs, kidneys, and bacon. The saucepan and the kettle, both showed—because they had boiled with enthusiasm—the black and respectable garb of labour. The first freshness was gone from the colour of her rugs and curtains. The mignonette in the window-box, which had been all the summer so great a solace to her, was now reduced to three scentless stalks. The summer was over, and the air, when she opened the window, blew fresh and cold; and as for her face, as she looked in the glass and wondered what Violet would say, it seemed to have grown longer, though that could hardly be, and graver. In the past three months how much had she learned and how much had she seen?

Her last day! She was going home—to the real home; in what Sam called the camp of those who are the natural enemies of the working-classes, where no one has to work, and the days flow on in idlesse all; where there is abundance, where there is music, where there is Art, and where there is the magic of poetry; where the girls are wrapped in soft silks, and kept from hearing how the workwomen cry aloud and cry in vain, and how they suffer in patience, hand in hand, with no one to help them or to care whether they live or die. But their cry, and the memory of their sufferings, would never leave her. She knew that she could no longer remain in that camp; she must come back again! She must return to the world where the women suffer. Everybody who once visits that world must go back to it. Those who work in it never want to leave it. Only three months ago: why—Claude was then her brother; what was he now? How could they go on working together when he should find out the truth? Three months ago they were both children of an honest workman, dead long since, and now Claude's father was not dead at all, but a shameful, horrible, living creature, who was going to bring misery upon all of them unless she could keep him silent and obscure. That silence, at any cost, she would procure and pay for—Claude must never know or suspect, and Violet must never know or suspect.

She would come back again, not as a visitor, but to live. That was now her firm resolve. She was as bent upon it as a novice is bent on taking the vows. But she would no longer live in her single chamber. That was not necessary. Enough for three months to have been housemaid, cook, parlourmaid, and lady's-maid all in one; enough for honour to have carried water upstairs, swept her own room, cooked her own dinner, boiled the kettle, made the bed, and cleaned the window. In one respect only she differed from the old woman below her—that she put out her washing. Now the old woman never had any to put out. For the greater part of the time her bed had been occupied by a girl in a consumption, so that she had to sleep as she could, on a chair, or a bed made up of three chairs. One must be a Moravian missionary before one can contemplate without a shudder a continuance of this way of life. She was coming back, but it would be to a home of her own, where she could live somewhat more as she was accustomed to live. Her house should be in Hoxton—she was resolved upon that, but it would not be quite in the midst of those who habitually get drunk on Saturday nights, and commonly use coarse imprecations, and when in liquor knock down and kick their wives. Even the Fellows of Toynbee Hall do not actually live in the very courts and lanes of the Whitechapel Road and Commercial Street. No doubt they will do so when, by their efforts, these courts have become Courts of the Great King; at present they seclude themselves in their College, each man with his own room æsthetically furnished for the pleasure of his soul, and removed somewhat from noise and stress and struggle of the common life. We may, in fact, give ourselves up, 'like anything,' for our fellow creatures, who will very likely give up nothing, not even a humble little vice or two, in return; but there are some hours in the day which should be kept apart and consecrated, even by the most thorough Renunciator, for the recreation and refreshment of his soul. All the monks, hermits, and recluses on record made the great mistake that they did not provide such hours of rest. The gain, for example, in the way of spiritual elevation would have been inestimable if the Holy Fakeer, Simon Stylites, had let himself down by a rope ladder, once a day, just to enjoy in the cool of the evening the conversation of the damsels and gossips in the bazaar; and think of the difference it would have made to the saint who used to swing all day with the hook in his back, if some kind friend had taken that hook out of him every day, at the going down of the sun, so that for a couple

of hours at least he might have smoked a pipe and had a chat beneath the village banyan. To what pinnacles of spirituality might not the Fakeer Simon and the hooked saint have risen! But they failed. Simon got no higher, spiritually speaking, than the top of his pillar, and the other holy man never got outside, so to speak, of his dangling hook, because they were always attached to these foolish things. And now their sayings, if they ever said anything, and their discoveries, if they ever made any, in Theology and Morals, are quite lost and forgotten, just for want of that little daily intermission and rest, which would have brightened them up and inspired them with words of wisdom.

These general reflections applied to Valentine mean that too much Hoxton for those who have the best interests of Hoxton at heart is bad for Hoxton.

When Valentine went down stairs, she found her friend the letter writer starting on his daily round among the German immigrants. There had been recently quite a large importation of Polish Jews who were making a little Yiddish Poland for themselves up a court. I think they had brought with them a great many barrels of native dirt, so as to feel home-like; and were now living on charity, in the begging of which the scribe was making an unusual harvest. He was doing so well that he had bought a new pair of second-hand boots; like a tax-gatherer, he carried his ink in one waistcoat-pocket and his pen in another, while his writing-paper lay in a shabby old leather case, which perhaps was once brown, but now was black with age. He greeted Valentine with cheerfulness, though the Bishop at the moment was lying grievously ill, and his family were gathered at the Palace, and three physicians were in consultation.

'But suppose the Bishop dies,' said Valentine; 'then your dream will be finished.'

'Yes,' he answered, with his soft and gentle smile. 'Yes, if the Bishop does not recover, my dream will be finished indeed; for I am the Bishop, you know. You are leaving us to-day?'

'To-morrow morning. I have got, where I am going, another mother and another sister. Do you not think it is time I went to see them?'

They were standing in the court, between the little Chapel and the open space on the south side, where two or three houses have been pulled down. The old man pointed with his stick to Melenda's window, which was open, showing the new clean blind and the new curtains; next, he passed that stick slowly before

all the houses comprehensively and severally, meaning to include them all; and then he pointed to the little children swarming about the place like tadpoles in a pond; and, lastly, he indicated the women, bustling about their daily tasks. He did this solemnly and slowly, as one who hath a thing to say and thus delivers his soul.

'Do you know,' he asked, after performing this ceremony, 'do you know what they are saying, all of them, at your departure?'

'What are they saying?'

'They are saying, "Return, O Shulamite!"'

He walked away slowly, with his rounded shoulders, his long grey hair, and his ragged coat; an old man who ought to have been taken right away and forbidden to work any more; who should have been provided with all kinds of things that are pleasant to old men—with books and sunshine and warmth and companionship. In a well-ordered State this will be done for all the old men alike, from saint to sinner, from Duke to ditcher. But nothing can ever be done now for this individual poor old man, and you will presently discover why.

'Return, O Shulamite!' The words lingered in her ears; the sweet old words of love and yearning.

Did they want her to return? Had she done anything to anybody during her three months that they should want her to come back to them, or that they should miss her presence among them?

There is a Sense which lies dormant with most of us. It may always be awakened, and, once roused, it never leaves us. Let us call it, if you please, the Sense of humanity. It is not philanthropy, nor benevolence, nor sentimentality; it is a thing much fuller and wider than any of these. Peter got this Sense when he had the Vision of the Great Sheet. It is the Sense of the Universal Brotherhood. Some of the French Republicans were filled with it when they first began to shout their cry of Equality and Fraternity. Some of the Socialists are filled with this sense: it has nothing to do with religion or with creed: the lives of the Saints are full of the stories of men who have had this sense strongly developed; the lives of the Sinners, which have yet to be written—would that I could attempt that stupendous task!—will also be found quite full of such stories. Saint or Sinner, it matters not; the Sense of Humanity may be found in either. One may be a Peer and have it; one may be a beggar and have it not. Those who have it, and have developed

it, are like mathematicians, when they resolve all plane forces to two, and all forces in space to three, for they presently resolve humanity into the simple pair—the man and the woman; or, to be practical, since in the world there are no planes, but everything is of three dimensions, into the man, the woman, and the child. It is a Sense by means of which one is enabled to separate the man from his clothes, whether they are rags or gowns of office, and from his sins, whether they be those which society allows, or those which are not recognised; and—which is a dark saying—it destroys respect and yet builds up reverence. Valentine had discovered this Sense; she had awakened it in Claude; she saw it in Sam, in the Doctor, and in the Assistant Priest.

When the letter-writer had passed out of Ivy Lane Valentine remembered the old woman who lived below her and got drunk whenever she could. She was not at all a nice old person, but Valentine thought she would see her before she departed—it would be neighbourly. So she knocked at her door and went in. This morning she looked very dreadful, because she had been tipsy the evening before, and had got a bruise round one eye, and the other was red; her lips were tremulous and her cheeks blotched; also she wore no cap, which was an error in Art, because her head was bald in patches. Queen Venus, when she is old and bald, ought at least to wear a cap. And she was muttering over her work, which, as has already been stated, was intimately connected with approaching funerals.

'Well, my dear,' she said cheerfully, 'and how is the sweet young gentleman? And how long are you going to stay here?'

'I am going away to-morrow. I came to see if I could do anything for you before I go.'

'There, now! I said there'd be a wedding when I saw you in St. Luke's graveyard with him. A sweet young couple indeed. Ah! it does an old woman's heart good to let her eyes fall on such.'

'But I am not going to be married.'

'Well, my dear, it won't matter much how you arrange it. And there'll be another match soon, unless I'm mistaken, with Liz upstairs—there's another pretty one for you—and her young gentleman. Oh! I've seen them together too.'

'Is there anything I can do for you before I go?'

'Well,' said the old woman, 'I daresay he's given you some money. He looks the sort to be free of money.'

'I tell you I'm not going to be married.'

'I didn't say you were, my dearie. But if you've a shilling

upon you to spare, I'd thank you for it. Get all you can, my dear, get all you can while your time lasts.'

She looked detestably cunning and inconceivably wicked. Valentine, however, found a coin for her.

'The air's getting fresh now,' the old lady went on, 'and the nights are cold. When it's too cold to sit without a fire and to sleep without blankets, I've got to go back to the 'Ouse. It's warm there, if it's nothing else. You think it's hard, but wait till you're as old as me, my dear, and see if you don't come to it as well. Make yourself happy while you can. It's no use saving; spend and enjoy all you can get while you are young, my pretty. When you're old you'll have the remembrance of it, and it'll make you feel happy just to think that you didn't let the good times slip past. Don't forget me next year if I'm spared to come out. Oh! it does one good in such a place as this, even to see a pretty girl with a proper frock on. But there, you won't be pretty when you come back here. Lord! what a figure I had once! And I can tell you about the time when I had a house of my own!'

Valentine left her at the commencement of these recollections. Eve, in age and decay, long after she had eaten, not one, but all the forbidden apples within reach, and longed for those out of her reach, may have looked so and talked so. A curious case for the spiritual physician. Next year she will be 'out' again, for these old women are tough and long-lived; and perhaps for many years she will continue to be alternately 'in' and 'out,' and to exist as an example and a warning for the young. This dear lady, too, ought to be taken away and carefully cherished, with warmth and good food, and the semblance of liberty. Not that she would ever repent her of her sins, or wish the memory of the past to be other than it is, or get a gleam of light into her darkened soul about a better life. A better plan, perhaps, would be painless and sudden extinction. But the old lady, who, I suppose, would have to be consulted, for form's sake, is not yet educated to the point of perceiving how much her disappearance would benefit mankind. The subject opens a wide field for speculation, for there are so many among us who might with advantage be painlessly and unexpectedly extinguished.

Valentine proceeded on her way down Ivy Lane calling at the houses where she had friends, that is to say, at nearly every house. The children ran after her as she went, catching at her hands and hanging to her skirts. That means nothing, because children are so foolish as to trust and love every one who is kind to them. 'Come back soon,' they cried; 'Come back soon.' Then from

the children Valentine went to see her friends the workwomen in their rooms. She knew, by this time, dozens of them, which is not difficult in this Thimble-and-Thread-Land, where there are so many thousands always at work. The women paused in their work for a minute to bid her farewell. There was the young tailoress of nineteen with two babies and a husband out of work, and her mother who looked after the babies, while she worked from seven in the morning till ten at night, for eight shillings a week, less the cost of coal and candle, soap and cotton. She was a handsome, capable-looking girl, with square chin, fresh lips, and strong eyes. She looked up and laughed a welcome, and when Valentine bade her farewell, she cried, but not for long, although a whole hour's crying would only have cost her a penny and one-fifteenth. 'But you'll come back soon,' she said. Then there was the woman who lived on the ground-floor, working all day long for bare life, with her daughter; there was the old lady with the imbecile husband, who worked for both; there was the girl who ought to have been married some years before, and there was the girl who ought not to have been married for some years to come; they all stopped to bid her farewell and to say 'Come back soon,' and then returned again to their breathless and headstrong flight from the Fury of Famine, who pursues them continually with a scourge of knotted cord, or a flagellum loaded with lead, such as that with which the Romans corrected disobedient slaves. Then there were the older women with their great families—Nature, very oddly, when the Horn of Plenty is quite empty, always fills it with babies. How bravely they work, these mothers! And how their faces harden, and how early the lines gather round lips and eyes! Surely, as the girls murmur when the drilling begins, surely, 'it is a Shame!'

And from them too, from every room into which Valentine had found her way, from every court there came the cry, 'Come back soon'—'Return, O Shulamite!' Strange how the words lingered in her ear and repeated themselves—words sometimes will just as if they followed one about or were echoed within the recesses of the brain.

At the door of the Boys' Institute, she met the Rev. Mr. Randal Smith. He was looking pale and overworked, because he had been in London all the summer; and besides, had given away his money, and had none to go on holiday with; and his long coat and broad-brimmed black hat were shabby because he could not afford new ones, and he looked faded, and dejected, and boyish, and without dignity.

'I know you are going,' he said gloomily. 'The Doctor told me.'

'I am coming back again.'

'It is wonderful that you stayed so long. We shall miss you, though you never come to church.'

'Not to your church.'

'Oh! what a power for good you might be if you chose! Why, you might bring all those boys of mine to church: they would follow you. It's the only thing for them—Church Discipline and Confession. I know you laugh at us; but there is nothing except the confessional for getting a hold over the people and putting the priests in their right place.'

'Well, Mr. Smith, if you will confess to the Doctor, I dare say he will confess to you. Will not that satisfy you? Never mind your confessional, tell me about yourself. You look pale—you want a holiday.'

'I cannot get one, unfortunately.'

As Valentine considered this young man she remembered that it was for some such life as this, without the choral services, that Claude was giving up his career. What if he should weary of it?

'Tell me,' she said, 'you who work so hard and do so much for the boys—are you contented with your life?'

'I am quite contented with it. I ask for nothing better.'

'That is a brave thing to say. Would you, if you had the chance, exchange it for an easier life and a larger income?'

'Not now,' he replied sturdily. 'When I grow old and feeble I should like a stronger man to come here.'

'Do you think that everybody engaged in such work as this continues to be as satisfied and contented?'

'I think so. We must not desire anything beyond the work that we are set to do.'

'Do you never wish,' Valentine continued, 'for opportunities of distinction? Are you never ambitious?'

'I have no other ambition,' he replied, with an ecclesiastical tag and a return of the breathless manner, 'than to be a faithful servant.' In fact, he had no desire for distinction at all, probably because in quite early life he understood that he was neither sharp nor clever

'And do you never,' she asked, 'do you never think of love or marriage?' She was asking all these questions in the interest, so to speak, of Claude, and she suddenly, but too late, remembered what the Doctor had told her. This young man had been

thinking about love. 'Forgive me,' she said hurriedly, because he blushed and trembled and looked about for the earth to swallow him; 'forgive me, Mr. Smith, I ought not to have asked you that question.'

'It—it doesn't matter. Thank you,' he said, 'it's of no consequence.'

'I was only wondering,' she explained, 'whether in such work as yours there never comes a sense of weariness, as if it was all no good and one might as well be living like the rest of the world.'

'There is no weariness of the work. Sometimes, perhaps, sometimes one thinks of a life—with—with love in it.' His eyes dropped, and he blushed again.

'No weariness in the work. That never palls, does it?'

'Well,' he was really a truthful young man, 'there are the church services. It is no doubt the best discipline possible for a man, and of course we say matins and evensong for the whole parish, but as nobody ever comes to hear them, one sometimes feels as if there were too many services.'

'So I should think.'

'It is a weakness of the flesh which I hope to overcome in time.'

She touched his hand and left him with a pleasing and rather uncommon mixture in her heart, composed of admiration, respect, and pity in equal parts, and just as one adds to a claret cup a little sprig of borage, or a strawberry, so she added the merest dash of contempt. His life was so hard — he was so contented, so courageous, and so unselfish—he was so patient—he thought so little of himself—he was so free from any ambition except to be, as he said, a faithful servant—he accepted with so much meekness the tiresome and useless things which wasted his time and dragged him from his real work, the daily chanting of services which nobody attended, the weary iteration of litanies in an empty church and the fripperies which this poor ignorant lad took for the true religion of the past, the present, and the future; a religion in which, he thought, there was to be no singing except of Gregorian chants; and no sunshine except through painted windows; and no attitude for the laity *in sæcula sæculorum*, except of continual genuflexion before a close-shaven man in a cassock and a cope and a biretta cap, surrounded by boys in white surplices with pots of incense.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE LAST EVENING.

'You must spend this evening with us, Claude,' said Valentine; 'it is my last evening, and we are going to have tea in Melenda's room. Besides, I want you to say all sorts of kind things to the poor girl.'

'Your last evening! A good deal has happened, Valentine, since you came here first.'

'Yes, a great deal has happened. But, Claude, we must get those lines out of your forehead and the depression out of your eyes.' See how readily men betray their trouble.

'You will not do that easily, Valentine,' he said, with a forced laugh. 'The fates are too strong even for you.'

She was now quite certain that the trouble of his soul could only be caused by some knowledge of her father's history, but she could not learn how much he knew.

'You do not regret your choice, Claude.'

'I had no choice,' he replied gloomily; 'I thought I had. But I had not. There are some men, Valentine, who are condemned to obscurity from the very beginning; they can only be happy when they are unknown and forgotten.'

Claude was more than usually gloomy because he was suffering from an acute attack of a complaint not described in any book on medicine. Celsus and Galen ignore its symptoms. It has no name, but it is caused by family or paternal shame. His excellent father, who found in the torture of his son a truly delightful amusement, and concluded that the daughter, who lived in Hoxton, was not worth following up so long as she paid her weekly sovereign, now visited his chambers at all hours, having a master-key which he had made for himself. He borrowed Claude's clothes; he drank his wine; he sat there and fiddled all day long; he smoked tobacco there; he opened all the desks and drawers and read all the private papers—even those verses with which every young man loves to comfort his soul, and the letters from his friends; he came in the morning and stayed all day; he came in the evening and stayed all night. Claude might give up his chambers, but the man would follow him, and what would be the end? He demanded money perpetually, and always got some, if not all that he asked, by the exercise of a very simple

threat. If he did not get it he would go to his daughters. He had even begun to take away things which were portable and might be pawned, such as the silver mugs, those volumes which were expensively bound, and the pictures; honestly, however, giving his son the pawn tickets.

Claude made no objection at all. Let the man go on; let him strip the place; let him do what he pleased, so that he remained unknown to the rest of his family.

Claude forced himself, however, to assume a pretence of cheerfulness, and stayed with Valentine. They all had tea together in Melenda's room. It was a quiet party; Melenda, to begin with, was shy, and as yet a little awkward in the performance of her new character as Melenda the Amiable. Yet she looked the part. The new dressing of her hair changed her face, her eyes were no longer fierce; two days only of good food had taken the hungry look out of her face; she was in repose, and she was afraid of her brother, who, however, said nothing about the great and startling transformation—not even to offer a word of congratulation, being quite absorbed in thought about other things. As for Lizzie, she was still under the influence of Repentance, and not without fear that her lover might himself come to the house, and insist on her promises being kept. Moreover, the Shadow of Death rested upon the place, and in the next room lay one who patiently awaited the summons.

The autumn day was already closed, for in the middle of October the sun sets at five; the curtains were drawn, the lamp was lit, the fire burning, and Melenda, in the newly-born joy of her own humiliation, thought the room looked almost as lovely as Valentine's; and after tea they sat round the fire, Valentine holding Melenda's hand in her own.

About seven o'clock they heard steps upon the stairs, and there appeared at the door no other than Joe himself, accompanied by his daughter Rhoda, and Sam.

'Mother told us,' he said, 'that you were going away tomorrow. Why, what in the name o' wonder has come over the place?' For Melenda's room, he perceived, was transformed into a lady's bower.

'It is only that Melenda and I are friends at last,' Valentine explained. 'Come in, Rhoda dear: come in, Sam.'

'And so I thought I'd come. Well, I shouldn't ha' known the place, Melenda, I shouldn't really—nor you neither, I shouldn't—and I brought Rhoder along with me, and we went out of our way

to fetch Sam. Look at your Aunt Melenda, my gal; now she's something like. I never knew you were so well worth lookin' at, Melenda.' Melenda blushed and laughed.

'Sit down, Joe,' said Valentine. 'Rhoda, you take my chair. Sam, you must sit on the bed, unless you like to stand.'

So, for the first time since the departure of Polly into the aristocratic world, the whole of this remarkable family, counting Valentine as Polly, were gathered together. The vicissitudes of families have furnished many subjects for the moralist and the storyteller, as well as for the genealogist. In every House there are those who have climbed or are climbing, and those who have gone under and are still going lower. Down goes Jack, and with him his whole detachment. Up goes Dick, and with him his sons and his daughters and his grandchildren. But it is rare to find so much variety in one group and one generation. It is not usual, for instance, for a Fellow of Trinity to have one sister a needlewoman, and another a young lady; nor is it a general thing for a plumber's man to have one brother a Board School Master, and one a Cambridge Scholar. It is also unusual, Claude reflected, for any family to have a father with so remarkable a history as their own.

'You're going away,' Joe repeated slowly, looking still at Melenda, whose changed appearance fascinated him. 'You're going away.' It is the place of the elder brother to give utterance for the family on all occasions of importance, and on every *conseil de famille.* Joe accepted his responsibility, and was always ready to perform his duties as Head of the Family, though Claude might be a gentleman, and Sam had achieved greatness. 'You're going away to-morrow; well, you've done a deal o' good to us since you came. Mother, she'll miss you more than a bit. We left her cryin', didn't we, Rhoder. And so will the girls here —they'll miss you terrible, won't you, Melenda? Lord! it's wonderful. You look just exactly like a girl out of a shop, quiet and respectable, instead of going about in rags, and flying in one's face like a wild cat. And you'll miss her too, Liz; and as for that poor girl in the next room—your own room too—what in the world will she do without you?'

'But I'm not going away for long. I am coming back. I am going to live in Hoxton; so is Claude.'

Sam grunted.

'There was two of you came first,' Joe went on slowly. 'You said then as you didn't know which of the two was Polly. As for

the other one, she hasn't come again, has she? Very well; first, we don't need to say much about you before your face, do we? No. When you go away, whether it's for short or for long, there's some you've left behind who'll remember you, ain't there, Melenda?'

'She knows there is,' said Melenda.

'Well, and about the other one now. If it should happen,'—he said this very slowly, so that there might be no possibility of any mistake—'I wish to say—for all of us—that if it should happen to come to pass that the other one was to turn out to be Polly after all, and not you at all; and that you should turn out to be her ladyship's daughter, Miss Beatrice—which it may be for aught I know—why, I want to give you a message for the other one.'

'Yes, Joe, what is the message?'

'It is a message from all of us; from Melenda, and Sam, and Claude, as well as from me. It's to tell her not to be ashamed of her family, because her father was a man with such a character for Truth and Honesty as very few men can boast, and a clever workman as well'—— Oh, Joe!—Claude and Valentine glanced involuntarily at each other. 'That's what I've always told Claude. Don't let her be ashamed of her father; and as for us, why we don't expect her to come and live with us as you've done; we don't ask her, nor we don't expect her. We know that she's a young lady accustomed to live among young ladies, and we're on'y plain working people. It's enough that you've come. We haven't harmed you, have we? You've heard a bit of rough talk now and then; perhaps you've seen a bit o' rough ways, and found out a deal of things you never suspected before, I daresay; but our people haven't harmed you—our people never will harm any respectable girl. If she'd wanted us, she'd have come to us with you. So you tell her that she's a sweet young lady to look at, and we like to think of her pretty face, but we shan't take it amiss that she don't come to us, because she is not one of us. Don't forget to tell her that—not one of us has got anything to ask of her or to take of her.' Sam snorted, and Melenda tossed her head. She had surrendered to one and not to both. 'She needn't be a bit afraid that any of her relations will ever seek her out, or intrude upon her, except Claude, and he's a gentleman. I don't see that she's any call to be ashamed of us as honest and respectable people, ain't we, Melenda? and one of us has worked himself up noble, hasn't he, Sam? As for her father, you tell her

again that he was one in a thousand—ah!—as one may say, one of a thousand for honesty.'

With the repetition of this Colossal falsehood, Joe paused. Then he added a few words of personal application, just as a clergyman winds up his discourse.

'As for you,' he said, 'whether you are Polly, or whether you are not, you're a lady, and such we are glad to see. You can't come too often nor stay too long. You don't want to poke your nose into the working-man's affairs, as some ladies do; you don't think your duty lays in giving advice gratis; you don't want to manage folk as if they were Sunday School children; you don't come the Temperance Gospel nor the Blood and Fire Hallelujah over us; you don't look at us as if we were specimens in a museum; you don't sniff and make believe as if you were sorry for us all when there's a little mess about the place; when a chap's in trouble or down in his luck, you don't wait for three weeks while the case is gone into; you don't talk about us as if we working people were the Poor, and everybody else was the Rich. Sam does that when he gets into a rage, but it don't amount to more than slashing into the System. Sam thinks he can make us all rich and happy with a new System. Lord! there ain't a great deal of difference between us after all; it's mostly a matter of clothes. Look at Melenda, now you've smartened her up. She ain't so pretty as you, but now she's dressed and quiet, she looks as nice mannered, almost.'

'Thank you, Joe,' said Valentine. 'If it should be as you think, and Violet should prefer her present life, which is possible, I will tell her what you say. If it should not be so, why, all the more reason for my coming back to live among my own people, and to be proud of my brothers. Oh! Joe, I do think you are the best fellow in the world.' For that brave sticking out for his worthless father, so that the brothers and sisters might never be ashamed, and never even suspect the truth, went straight to her heart.

'And now we'll go,' said Joe. 'Come, Rhoder. Good-bye, Miss Eldridge.' He took her hand respectfully, not fraternally, and she clearly perceived that he knew her secret.

Then Melenda and Lizzie went to look after Lotty, and the three who remained began to talk.

'And what are you going to do when you come back?' asked Sam. 'You can't do any general good, though you may do something for these three girls. Nothing can be done of any real

use until the System is changed, and we've begun by putting the Land on a proper footing. That's at the bottom of all.'

'You shall settle that, Sam,' said Valentine. 'Meantime we shall take the world as it is, and go on tinkering in our small way, until your revolution sets everything right for ever after.'

'What's the use of arguing with a woman?' Sam asked, turning to Claude. 'Here we are, working up for the grandest change the world has ever seen—the change that is going to give the people their own back again—and she keeps on at us because we don't stop to make a fuss about the workwomen.'

'We cannot expect you, with such a magnificent scheme in your head, to think about your sisters, Sam, can we?'

'It will all come in time. I am thinking about them, I tell you. When we've abolished rent and competition, and interest, and capital; when we've nationalised the land, and prevented anybody from getting rich, and made everybody work, I suppose women's wages will be as good as men's; that is, they will all be alike, and they'll mean a good living to everybody—won't that satisfy you?'

'Perhaps, when it comes. But, Sam, how long it is in coming? And suppose we don't like it when it does come? Suppose you only make it more possible for selfish men to use the labour of others, and for strong men to trample on the weak?'

'You are talking nonsense. You don't know the very first beginnings of our revolution.'

'Claude, have you nothing to say?'

Claude hesitated. Things had grown terribly real with him of late, and he spoke slowly and with sadness. 'I do not suppose,' he said, 'that some men are born with saddles fitted to their backs, and others with spurs on their heels. And I think that Maurice was right when he taught that the reign of Universal Competition is not exactly and altogether the Kingdom of Heaven. And I do not believe that the Lord is always on the side of the man who is making money.'

'Very good,' said Sam. 'Why, this is just as I would begin myself.'

'But I am certain there is no System, or Institution, or code of laws, whatever, which can be imposed upon a people, unless they are ready for it, and desire it for themselves. You will never live to see your dream realised, Sam, because it will be always impossible to make the men of ability, who are the only men to be considered, desire a system in which they themselves

shall not be able to do good to themselves first. If it were established to-morrow, it would fall to pieces the next day, for want of incessant and universal watchfulness. I think we had better take the world as it is, and use the materials lying ready to our hands.'

'Oh! the world as it is,' Sam repeated, 'with the Lords and the Church, and the parsons, and the landlords, and the manufacturers, and the capitalists!'

'With all of them—just as it is—let us take it as it is. Meanwhile there is a Revolution going on of which you know nothing. It is a movement which will be perhaps one of the greatest things that the world has ever seen.' He did not mean the Earthly Tract Society. 'Men and women who have learned all that science and art and history and philosophy can teach them, are returning to the soil and to the gutter from which their fathers sprang. They come back laden with treasures, which they long to lavish among the people. This is to practise the Christianity which you advanced Thinkers despise. Consider another thing, Sam. It is not only that these missionaries will live among the people and teach them all kinds of things, but they will bring the fierce light of publicity to bear upon their ways and their wants. Do you think that any employer in the world would dare to pay his working women as Melenda has been paid, and to treat them with the cruelty of drilling as she has been treated, if he knew that his name and his rate of pay and his treatment of woman would the very next day be paraded in the public press? The power of publicity has only just commenced. The Journalists as yet only half understand their own power. Why, these men and women are going about actually setting up electric lamps in dark places. Let us try to bring this light into all the workshops, so that no kind of grinding and tyranny shall be overlooked. You know what the Russian student said at the grave of his dead comrade, while the police stood by ready to arrest him for a word; "My brothers," he said, stretching out his arms, "Light! We want more light." With light, everything may come; even some of the universal unselfishness, Sam, which your generous heart thinks possible. At least, the first steps will be taken when the people begin by themselves to resolve that justice and equity shall be meted out to all, even to the London working-girl. And as for systems, the force of opinion is stronger than any system. Opinion is the will of the people; let us get opinion on the side of the girls. And then—Light—more Light.'

CHAPTER XXX.

THE BISHOP'S DEATHBED.

It was about nine o'clock when Sam left them. He was angry, because he could not convince them, and because his brother was so very near the gate of truth, and so very perverse in his refusal to step in. And yet, said Sam to himself, logic, justice, equity, reason, natural religion, the laws of the Universe—everything cries aloud that there is no Gospel but Socialism. All men are born equal—every man with two legs and ten fingers, and no possessions at all, not a scrap of purple velvet, and not a shovelful of land; no spurs on his heels, and no saddle on his back; no crown on his head, and no chains on his wrists: for every one the same inheritance, namely, the whole of the round world and all that therein is, that is, as much of it as, divided among the x inhabitants, in equal portions, constitutes his share. Every man must work every day for the general good, he must eat at a common table—why should one man have cutlets à la Soubise, and another, cold pig? He must share in all the luxuries that are attainable by every one: if there be other luxuries which are not enough to go round, they may be divided among the sick and the aged; why should one man drink champagne and another vin bleu? This is Sam's position, and, really, it is impossible to dislodge him from it. He is impregnable, because he is perfectly right. Against him, however, is a force with which he and his friends have never reckoned; it is sometimes called Human Nature. It is, in fact, the simple, unarmed, naked, natural Man, who, alone, is a match for a host, armed with all the weapons of logic, and reason, and right, because of his selfishness, which is a whole armour in itself. He wants all he can grab for himself, and he will go on grabbing all he can. He derides equality; he holds that the spoils are for the strongest; and on this principle he is resolved to live, and so will continue to live until the Kingdom of Heaven comes to change all, and make his position disagreeable. Such being the habit, custom, resolution, and attitude of the Natural Man, the Socialist may rage furiously, but he will rage in vain.

'I must go, too,' said Claude, taking his hat; 'I am glad they came to-night. Alas! the summer is over, to-morrow morning you will be gone. Good-night, Valentine, and farewell.'

'Why a solemn farewell, Claude?'

'Because the past can never be repeated——'

'Nothing is ever repeated; but things can be continued. If you are going to walk, let me walk a part of the way with you. Oh! I am not afraid of returning alone, no one ever molests me. I am just a shop-girl going home, you know, after business.'

They went out together. The streets were crowded, because it was fine, and a Saturday night. Even Pitfield Street and East Road, which are considered quiet thoroughfares, were filled with costers' carts, and with folk who came out to buy. The City Road was noisy with multitudinous footsteps, and a good half of Old Street was blocked with the overflow of Whitecross Street, where there is held every day and every evening the noblest costers' market in the whole of London, not even excepting that of the Whitechapel Road. The space is more limited; but then, the very narrowness sets off the variety and cheapness of the goods displayed. Many costers' markets there be in this great town: one would not willingly do injustice to Clare Market, to the New Cut, to the High Street, Marylebone, or to Leather Lane; but that of Whitecross Street outshines them all.

'These faces haunt me,' said Valentine, as they moved slowly through the crowd. 'I shall carry home with me a ghostly crowd of faces. How many thousands of faces have I seen here, and none of them alike? The noise is nothing; one does not remember noise, but the faces—the faces remain; they are always with me.'

'If the faces were all boiled down into one by repeated photographs, what sort of a face would it be?'

'Not into one face, Claude; there must be two faces; those of the working-man and the working-woman. I think the man's face would show a certain sluggishness and a good deal of self-indulgence, and in his eyes one would discern a sense of humour; the woman's face would show patience and suffering, and her eyes would be sharp with indignation; they would have no humour in them. Whatever they might turn out they would not be bad faces.'

The English face, compounded of many races, is seldom, in fact, a bad face; it is good-tempered to begin with; it is independent and self-reliant; there is a love of justice in it; there is strength in it; there is capability in it; there is the possibility of wrath in it; such wrath as makes the Englishman, when his blood is roused, the most dangerous animal in the world—

witness the savagery of our soldiers in India not quite thirty years ago; yet the devil faces which one sees in Paris, when the people are out in the streets, are never found in Whitecross Market. To watch the English face is to learn trust in the English people.

'You will cease to think of your troubles, Claude,' said Valentine; 'you will think of these men and women instead, won't you? It will be best for you; and I am sure it is best to let the dead bury the dead.'

'I wish to heaven I could. But suppose the dead refuse to be buried.'

She said no more. Perhaps he had found out even more than she had feared. Presently they reached the end of Old Street where it runs like a broad river into Goswell Road and Aldersgate Street, and here Valentine stopped.

'Good-bye, Claude,' she said; 'come to see us at home tomorrow evening. I am going home again. Oh! I have had the strangest, the most beautiful summer that ever any girl had, and all by your help, Claude. How can I ever thank you enough? I wonder if you can understand at all what it has been to me—this revelation of Men and Women, whom we dare to call common men and women. I am like Peter after the Vision and the Message, which only came to him three times. But my Vision and my Message, Claude, have been repeated to me daily for ninety days.'

'And as for me, Valentine,' he replied huskily, 'I can never tell you; I can never even try to tell you what the summer has been to me.'

He pressed her hand and she left him. She was not, you see, his sister; that he had known all along, and now she would find out the truth, and it was impossible that they should continue together in the old relations. What more? He loved her. Who could help loving her, who was so winsome, so loyal, and so brave? He had always loved her, ever since the day when he found out that she was not his sister; and for her sake he had given up all his ambitions, yea, even the ambition of the Chancellor's woolsack; and there were moments when it seemed possible, but the appearance of his father made that and everything else impossible; and now, he should never be able to tell her, even in the after years, what she had become to him. How could such a man as himself, with such a Family Record, dare to connect himself, even in thought, with such a girl?

He stood at the corner of the street watching her light figure

speeding quickly along the pavement. Now, either because his heart was so full of love that he could not bear to let the girl go out of his sight, or because a Divine admonition came to him—they do come sometimes and interfere strangely with the fortunes of men, though generally we disregard them, so that rogues triumph—Valentine had not got thirty steps before he felt constrained to turn and follow after her. He did so, keeping a few yards behind her, and not losing sight of her for a moment.

The light figure moved swiftly among the people who crowded the pavement, through the men who lounged hands in pocket, and the women who pushed basket in hand. They made way for her to pass, no one offering her the least familiarity. Some of them, perhaps, knew her by this time. She passed through the crowd and crossed the street to the north side where there were fewer people. Presently she stopped, and Claude watched her while she talked to a girl. I know not what she said, or whether she gave the girl anything, but when Valentine left her that girl went away quickly, and in exactly the opposite direction, which seemed as if she had changed her mind about something. In the City Road she stopped again, to talk with another woman who had a baby in her arms. She did give that woman something, and she, too, turned and walked away in another direction, which leads one to believe that she proposed to go home and put the baby to bed. One of these days we shall have a Female Police in addition to the present highly efficient masculine force. They will be called probably the Female Persuasives, rather than the Female Force; they will carry no clubs or revolvers, and they will be horribly dreaded by all kinds of sinners. When you have crossed the City Road and engaged, so to speak, with Brunswick Place, you are already within the limits of Hoxton itself, and if you are so happy as to live in that City of Industry, you are among friends, and almost at home; therefore you will naturally, as Valentine did, begin, at this point, to walk more slowly.

Claude still followed her, as far as the western entrance of Ivy Lane in St. John's Road. There he would have left her and gone his way, but for a thing which awakened his suspicions. St. John's Road is not better lighted than any other of the less important London streets, where they blindly follow the custom of our ancestors, and plant the gas lamps—each with a glass top artfully designed to let all the light mount upwards to the sky and so be lost—at the same intervals as were thought good in the old days of oil lamps. The conservatism of the official mind is a

truly wonderful subject for contemplation. The street was, however, well enough lighted for Claude to see a figure waiting about on the pavement opposite to Ivy Lane. There were plenty of people walking, but this man was evidently waiting, and when Valentine turned into Ivy Lane, this man crossed the road and followed her.

He followed her at a distance of three or four yards—Claude wondered what it might mean. Then he passed under the gas lamp at the entrance of the street, and Claude saw his face. Heavens! It was the face of his father! What could he want with Valentine, except to break his promise, and molest and frighten her? It was his father, and by a lurch of the shoulders which betrayed him, his father, it was certain, had been drinking.

Claude quickened his step, his first impulse being to stop the man; but he checked himself, because to do so would certainly cause a row in the street. He would wait till Valentine was in her own room. He kept close behind, therefore, ready to interfere for her protection.

The street was pretty full of women, talking, though it was past ten o'clock and the evening was chilly: there were also a good lot of children, shouting and playing. Valentine passed through them, with a word of greeting and a fair good night for each. The crowd parted right and left and made a lane for her, because they knew her; they parted again for Mr. Carey, because the crowd always does make a respectful lane for a man who has been drinking. But for Claude they did not make way, and he had to force his way through, and the children got about his feet, so that the chase drew ahead of him, and he was unable to prevent what most he dreaded.

On the ground floor Valentine found Mr. Lane's door wide open, and his candle burning. She looked in and nodded pleasantly.

'You are feeling well to-night?' she asked.

'Never better, never better,' he replied stoutly. 'Business has been good this week. I think they are beginning to find me out at last. It is strange, too, because I am very near the end of my dream.'

'I hope not. Can't your dream last a little longer?'

'I've got no control over it. You don't expect me to alter the decrees of Fate. The good Bishop is on his deathbed—I am certain he can never recover. The children are with him.

The prayers of all the churches in the Diocese have been offered for him. Many there are who live on, long after sixty-seven: mostly they are men who have only cumbered the ground, whose lives should be an eternal shame to them—men like me—unprofitable dogs. Men like the Bishop are generally called away early, before the allotted span. Well, he will go to his own place. But as for me, what shall I do when he is dead and buried?'

'Indeed, Mr. Lane, I do not know. You will have to find some other amusement for your evenings.'

'Amusement? For me?' He shook his head; and she left him.

Then the old woman who lived at the back came out of her den.

There's been a gentleman asking for you, my dear,' she said—'not a young gentleman: oh, no!—an elderly gentleman—quite the gentleman—with a pipe in his mouth, and a little in liquor: and most pleasant in his manners, and liberal and generous.'

'A gentleman for me?'

'Yes, my dear, and very anxious he was to know your ways, and asked a many questions!' (she did not add that he had begun by giving her a florin) 'about what you do with yourself, and who gives you your money. But I was very careful—oh! I am very careful indeed, my dear—I didn't let out nothing about the young gentleman. For, thinks I, very likely he may be one of the jealous sort!'

'Oh!' said Valentine, impatiently, 'what have I to do with any elderly gentlemen?'

'I do hope there's not going to be any trouble about the young gentleman. P'r'aps it wasn't jealousy, and to be sure, I have known, more than once, the lawyers to step in at the last moment and stop it, when the banns was on the point of being put up, so to speak, and the wedding-ring bought. Mind, my dear, don't you give up the letters—don't give up a single line of writing—make 'em pay for the letters, if it's five hundred pound——'

'Here he is again—don't forget about the letters. He do look like a lawyer a bit, come to look at him, don't he?'

It so happened that Mr. Carey, at the very beginning of this evening, and when he had not yet taken more than two or three glasses, had begun to consider the problem of his daughter, and why she lived in Ivy Lane, and where she got her money from,

and by what steps she had come to look like a lady, and what a beautiful thing it would be for himself if he could by any means entrap her, and make her his confederate and partner. Such things have been done; but first it is necessary to know a little of a girl's history. He drank another glass or two, then he resolved that he would himself pay a visit to Ivy Lane and find out what he could. It was a beginning, and he would trust no one but himself. So he came, and began, Valentine being out, by pumping the old lady, who willingly told all she knew, which was little to the point. Then he waited for her return.

'Well, my dear,' he began cheerfully, 'well, Marla, my gal, I've found you out at last—eh? You didn't expect me, did you? Well, this is an agreeable surprise for you, because, my dear, I'll take the liberty, being your father and all, of asking what it means, and how you make your money? It's my duty to see that my children are living honest, and my pleasure to advise them in their courses.'

'Go away!' said Valentine.

The old woman stopped at the foot of the stairs to watch. 'Was he a lawyer? Was it a jealous one?'

'Go away!' Valentine repeated. The man laughed. The drink had given him courage. Otherwise he would have obeyed.

In the front room the dreamer started and looked round: he had heard a voice he knew.

'Come,' Mr. Carey whispered—'let us talk it over friendly. Give me a kiss, my dear.'

He laid his hand upon her shoulder. Valentine shrank from him with a cry. Melenda heard her—flew from her room, and sprang from the top to the bottom of the stairs with one bound, and stood before her.

'Now, then, who are you?' she cried. 'Don't you be afraid, Valentine. It's only some man who's been drinking, and come to the wrong house! I ain't afraid of any man, drunk or sober—don't you mind. Your very last night, too!'

'Now, don't you put your oar in, young woman. You'd best stand out of the way, you had!'

'Go out of this,' said Melenda, firmly, 'or I'll show you the way.'

'Well,' he went on—'if this don't beat all!' He steadied himself, because the drink made him just a little heavy in the head, and just a little uncertain in his speech: 'They ought to

be proud of me—everybody else would be proud of such a man—you'd be proud, you would, my dear—you look like somebody I knew once—you do indeed—it's a most remarkable likeness! There isn't such another man as me in all London. Why, you wouldn't believe it, from the conduct of that skittish little devil there, that I'm James Carey—the great James Carey. Everybody has heard of James Carey! They used to call me the King of the Burglars. I'm King James the First—his Gracious Majesty King Carey. His Royal Highness and Right Reverend King Carey!'

'Go away!' said Melenda, 'or I'll tear you in pieces!'

She hadn't torn anybody to pieces for some time; she had not even enjoyed the luxury of a Rage Royal, since the last day of the drilling. Now she looked fierce enough for anything. But then a hand was laid upon the man's shoulder—

'Come away,' said Claude—'come away without a word!'

'It's the boy,' said the man, with such a gush of horrid blasphemy only possible after a wretched man has swallowed compulsory doses of Scripture for twenty years. 'It's the adjective boy! What's he doing here? Oh! you think you'll get rid of me, do you? The allowances are to stop, are they?' He addressed Claude, because between him and Valentine there stood a tigress with flashing eyes and thirsty talons. 'You'll stop yours, will you? Well, we'll see to that, my young swell, and whether you'll rather pay down, or let me own up—pay down, my boy, or let me own up.' He had not drunk so much but that he was perfectly coherent in his speech, but the drink made him foolhardy.

'Go!' said Claude.

'I shall not go.' He raised his voice and added a volley, copious and eloquent, of those flowers of language which are so abundant in Ivy Lane as to pass for weeds. 'I shall stay,' he concluded, 'all night if I like.'

By this time a little crowd was gathered round the door, expectant of a row.

Then there happened a strange and wonderful thing. The door of the ground-floor front opened, and there came forth, slowly and unsteadily, the old man whom they all knew, the harmless old man who had lived among them so many years, and had held speech with none. He carried in his one hand a lighted candle. The other hand, raised to his shoulder, trembled and clutched and closed. His face was perfectly white, as white as

the face of a dead man. His long limbs trembled with extreme weakness; his head was bent forward eagerly; his eyes were glaring. It was actually the face of a dead man with living eyes, which gleamed with light supernatural.

'Oh!' he said, with a deep sigh of satisfaction, 'at last I have found mine enemy. I was dying—but I heard his voice. The Bishop'—he turned to Valentine—'the Bishop is dying. And I was dying. But I knew I was not to die till I had seen him once again.' He looked round him as one might look who was taking a last farewell of earth, and he gave his candle to Valentine as one about to die upon the scaffold hands the last thing he values to the last friend beside him.

'No man,' he said, solemnly looking about him, 'hath power in the day of death; neither shall wickedness deliver them who are given to it.' Then a very wonderful change passed suddenly over his face. It became the face of a young man: the change which sometimes falls upon the face of one who is nearly dead fell upon this man's face before his death. Valentine saw it and knew that she was looking upon the man as he had been, save for his white hair, thirty-five years before, while he was yet in honour and respect. Mr. Carey saw it too—and staggered as if struck suddenly.

'You?' he said, 'you? I thought you must be dead long ago.' He became instantly sober, as half-drunken men sometimes do. Then as the long lean figure turned towards him with outstretched arms, he quickly stepped out of the house and fled, running through the people. After him, with long swift strides, followed Vengeance, long deferred. It seemed as if no one noticed them, for no one ran after them, and no one cried after them. They passed through the crowd unheeded, and as if unseen. When Claude thought of this afterwards it seemed to him a thing beyond and above the natural. Though the streets were full of people, this strange flight, this strange pursuit, attracted no attention at all, no more than if they were invisible. But he who fled was filled with a wild and dreadful terror, that which falls upon the heart when some long forgotten crime springs into light, and escape is impossible, and the time of forgiveness is past. And he who followed after was filled with such gladness of rage and satiated revenge as filled the heart of Fredegonde, when, after many years, she saw Brunehaut about to be dragged at the heels of the wild horse. The fugitive ran in vain, for at his heels, though he knew it not, there followed Death, before

whom all fly in vain. He was in the shape of an old man, striding with long steps, bareheaded, his grey hairs flying behind him, in rags, with panting breath, white face, and outstretched arms.

There is a place beyond St. John's Road where a bridge crosses the canal: and beyond the bridge there is a way down to the bank. It is a dark and narrow way. The man ran down here—thinking that he might so escape. But he did not. As he reached the tow-path the avenging hand was laid upon his shoulder. He turned and faced his enemy. Of what should he be afraid? A poor, old, trembling man who had been starving during all the years which he himself had spent in prison, well cared for and well fed. He looked so decrepit that James Carey laughed aloud and forgot his terror. He had been afraid because he had been drinking. That was all. Afraid of a silly old fool too weak to harm a girl.

'Man!' cried Mr. Lane, seizing his enemy with both hands and shaking him by the coat collar, 'Man! give me back my ruined life.'

James Carey would have laughed again, but that his enemy's face became distorted as by sharp and sudden pain—for once more, for the last time, came that clutching and tearing at the heart—and that his enemy's legs trembled and his body swayed to and fro, and they were on the water's edge, and the decrepit hands, strange to say, held him like a vice. Then there was a staggering and a struggle on the gravel: and a cry of agony and terror, and a splash in the water. . . and . . . and . . . why, Mr. Lane had got back his life, and, with it, had already learned, one hopes, why such misery and such weakness as his had been permitted even for such an infinitesimal period of time as thirty-five years. When the victim recovered his life, what did his tempter and oppressor recover?

'Who was it?' asked Melenda, when they were gone.

'A drunken man,' said Valentine.

'But he seemed to know you. And Claude knew him. And what had he done to Lizzie's father?'

'I do not know,' said Claude; 'but I know this of him, that he is a bad man. Do not ask any more, Melenda.'

'Well,' said Melenda, 'he's gone at any rate. Come upstairs, Valentine.'

She left them and went back to Lotty. The old woman, feeling the florin burn in her pocket, stole out gently, and made for the public-house opposite by a circuitous route, namely, half down

Ivy Lane and back again, so that she should not seem like going out expressly for a drop of gin. She would only have two twopenny goes and drink up the rest on the morrow—Sunday. And on Monday she would go 'in' again for the winter. Oh! this florin was a blessed windfall indeed, because now she would be able to go back to the House with some of the resignation which accompanies recent gin. The crowd at the door had dispersed, disappointed; there are always more disappointments than real rows; things seldom come off in all their possible fulness.

'The man is gone, Valentine,' said Claude. 'Do you know who he is?'

'Yes, I know him. Something terrible will happen. The other man—Lizzie's father—will do him a mischief; they are old enemies. Oh, it is more wickedness.'

'If there is to be more trouble,' said Claude, 'somebody must be here to meet it for you. Go upstairs, now, Valentine. Good night.'

Valentine obeyed. She did not ask Claude how he came to be there; it was natural that if she was in any danger he should be there to protect her. Nor did she ask Claude how he came to know the man.

Meanwhile, Claude shut the street door, and sat down on the stairs and waited. They were very uncomfortable stairs to sit upon, being steep and with narrow steps. The candle left in the room beside him went on burning until midnight, when it went out suddenly after just one flicker in the socket. Then the stairs were in perfect darkness, but the front room was lighted by the gas lamp in the street. Outside, the talk of the people grew languid, and finally ceased altogether, and the shuffling of their feet was heard no more; the children left off shouting and crying and went away to bed; the public-house shut up, and the men in the bar dispersed noisily; there was an occasional step of a belated resident, and then nothing but an echo of steps from Hoxton Street, or the distant shouting of some drunken man.

Claude sat on his uncomfortable perch for two or three hours, and then he remembered that there was a chair in the next room. He changed his position, but he did not allow himself to sleep. Strange! that the old man did not return. Had something happened? His mind was agitated and full of foreboding.

In the middle of October the nights are long: the sun does not rise until after six. Claude waited and watched through the

whole of that long night, for seven long hours. Neither of the two men came back. As for one, he was probably in the Temple asleep on Claude's bed, or drinking and smoking and fiddling through the night. But the other—Lizzie's father—where was he?'

And what would come of it all? What would be the end? As for Valentine, in a few hours she would be safe; in two days more she would know that she was not this man's daughter at all. She knew who he was: she said so. How did she know it? How much did she know? There was plenty to occupy his thoughts all through the night.

The morning broke at last—Sunday morning. At the first streak of daybreak Claude went out into the court, as if expecting to find there some traces of the missing pair. The air was keen and clear; Ivy Lane, as the light grew stronger, looked inconceivably disreputable, shabby and dirty, with the wreckage and rubbish of a week lying about, the cabbage stalks, bruised plums, rotten apples and pears, the shreds of paper and potsherds. Well, Valentine was going away: she was no longer to be considered: he was free, so far as she was concerned. He would go to Joe and tell him all; between the two their mother would be protected; he would give nothing more to his father, and as for his real name and the family history, let them both be proclaimed upon the housetops, with all the infamy and the shame of it, if needs must.

'Thank God,' he murmured—'Valentine is not his daughter!'

A little before eight, there was already some stir among the younger and hungrier residents; the elders lie in bed as long as they can on Sunday mornings; and when the bell of St. Agatha's was calling upon a deaf and stiffnecked people to get up and come to early celebration, and the assistant priest was hastily robing himself for that lonely Function, and the shops in Hoxton were getting swept out and garnished for the Sunday morning market, Valentine came downstairs.

'You here already, Claude?' she asked, surprised.

'Why, Valentine, you did not suppose I should go away and leave you unprotected, did you?'

'You have actually been here all night? You have been watching for me? Oh, Claude! it is too much!'

'Nothing is too much for you, Valentine. Don't think of me, but tell me—what do you know of this man? Why does he come here? Why did he follow you?'

'What do you know, Claude?'

'I know all that there is to know: the whole shameful business.'

'And I, too, know all that there is to know. Do not pain yourself to speak about it. I have known the whole story for a month—Joe and the mother both think he is dead.'

'But how did you come to know him?'

Valentine told her tale, briefly; and passing over one or two passages, especially that in which she was constrained to box the man's ears.

'I bought his silence,' she concluded—'I sent him money every week. But I knew that some time or other it would be found out. Claude, be brave—let us take Joe into our confidence and devise something that will keep him from the others.'

'I bought him, too,' said Claude—'but I will give him no more money. Thank Heaven, you are out of his reach, and so is Violet: she must never know. As for the others ——'

'Let us persuade him to go away, Claude. He may be bribed.'

'He will never go away as long as there is a house left in England that he has not robbed.'

There are so many houses in London alone, that the prospect opened up was more stupendous than the mind of man can well take in. And to think, besides, that new houses are always being built.

'At least, Valentine,' Claude went on, 'you are going home this very day. Go at once—if you go now you will find them at breakfast—if you stay here, there may be, I know not, some terrible tragedy. I feel as if anything may happen! Why has not that old man been home all night? And they were enemies, you say. Go at once, Valentine, before any scandal happens which may involve your name. So much, at least, we owe to Lady Mildred. I will get you a cab. Have you anything to pack?'

She obeyed. There was nothing that she wished to take away. She transferred the care of Lotty to Melenda, kissed the girls, promised to return in a day or two, and hurried away, with the sense that something was going to happen.

Claude remained, watching in Mr. Lane's room, all the morning. Presently Lizzie came downstairs to see her father, and appeared neither astonished nor alarmed to hear that he had not been home all night. He had slept out before, when he had work to do. Claude told her nothing of what he knew or suspected. He must have gone down Whitechapel way she said,

among the German Jews, who regard not the Christian Sabbath when they want work done.

At one o'clock the 'Adelaide' opened its hospitable doors, and the old lady of the back ground-floor crossed the court, and proceeded to spend what was left of her florin. In half an hour she came out, with trembling lips and glassy eyes, and returned to her own room, where she flung herself upon the floor heavily, the door wide open, careless of the world, to sleep off the last drink she would get for six months, at least.

At two, Claude thought he would wait no longer. Perhaps his father might have gone to the Temple.

He had not—no one was there, and there were no traces at all of his presence. Nothing had been taken away, no tobacco was on the table, and there were no empty bottles. This was very strange. Surely something must have happened!

(*To be continued.*)

Hobart Pasha.

THE name of Hobart Pasha has been for so many years prominently before the naval world, and always as that of the hero of some adventure which would seem wild if told of anybody else; he has appeared so full of life, of energy, and of 'go,' that probably few of us, even though we knew or could calculate his age, had realised that he was in reality approaching his sixty-fifth birthday; and our first idea, on hearing of his death last June, was that he had been prematurely taken from us. But at sixty-four, Hobart was no longer a young man; and though he could scarcely be called old, yet, in the fullest sense of the word, he had lived. Few men, in this age of civilisation, have succeeded in crowding more excitement into the short space of time that lies between the cradle and the grave. It is satisfactory to find that some picture of the man, as he was, has been preserved to us in the autobiographical sketches [1] written during the last few months of his life, and now edited by his widow. These cannot be considered as a biography; nor, indeed, do they make any pretence of being one. There is no attempt to fill in the details, many of which are purposely obscured; but they serve better than the most minute and the most scurrilous chronicle to present to the reader the portrait of the very remarkable man who has thus recorded his reminiscences of adventure and of service, by the light of an experience varied beyond that of any man of the generation now passing away, or perhaps even of any man of the former age, with the exception of Lord Dundonald, to whose career Hobart's offers some curious points of resemblance. If we here endeavour to repeat the story of this life, it is assuredly not with any intention of filling up the pages which he designedly left blank; but rather to give, in a short space, greater currency to the notes which he has bequeathed to us.

[1] *Sketches from my Life*, by the late Admiral Hobart Pasha; edited by Mrs. Hobart. London: Longmans & Co. 1886. Price 7*s.* 6*d.*

Augustus Charles Hobart-Hampden, third son of the late Earl of Buckinghamshire, a lineal descendant of John Hampden, whose name he assumed, was born on April 1, 1822. He entered the navy at an early age, and his first experiences were of the rudest. The description of the midshipmen's berth to which he was introduced might be compared with those of 'Midshipman Easy' or 'Peter Simple'; and his captain, though his cousin, is represented as an odious tyrant. Some of the stories told of this man are well-nigh incredible:—

'I have seen,' says Hobart, 'a captain order his steward to be flogged almost to death because his pea-soup was not hot. I have seen an officer from twenty to twenty-five years of age made to stand between two guns, with a sentry over him, for hours, because he had neglected to see and salute the tyrant who had come on deck in the dark.'

Such tyranny is by no means without a parallel; and, as Hobart says he saw it, there is no reason to doubt the correctness of the story. One more extraordinary is this:—

'On one occasion the captain of whom I have been writing invited a friend to breakfast with him, and there being, I suppose, a slight monotony in the conversation, he asked his guest whether he would like, by way of diversion, to see a man flogged. The amusement was accepted, and a man was flogged.'

That the man was flogged may, of course, be admitted; but it is impossible to avoid asking what proof the writer had of the previous circumstances. He does not say that he was one of the party at breakfast: indeed, the inference is that he was not, and that the breakfast was a *tête-à-tête*. The story, though told in evident good faith, appears to be founded on hearsay—possibly on the report of the steward who had neglected to serve the pea-soup hot. In any case, however, it is certain enough that in the early years of the century tyranny was too often mistaken for discipline, and still oftener, perhaps, sprang from a disordered liver, from the irritability engendered by solitude, and from the absence of all official or popular control. The gross forms of tyranny described by Hobart are happily long ago extinct, and the seamen are protected by regulations which the most irritable cannot venture to transgress; but, even now, those behind the scenes hear occasionally of captains whose 'livers' or 'nerves' permit them to exercise a good deal of petty tyranny on officers, who dare not complain, at the risk of getting their names marked at the Admiralty.

On leaving this ship Hobart was appointed to one of the squadron on the coast of Spain under Lord John Hay, and was landed with the naval brigade in support of Queen Christina. It was at the defence of San Sebastian that he received his 'baptism of fire'—with no great credit, if we are to take his confession *au pied de la lettre.*

'The fire,' he says, 'was hot and furious. I candidly admit I was in mortal fear, and when a shell dropped right in the middle of us, and was, I thought, going to burst (as it did), I fell down on my face. Lord John, who was close to me, and looking as cool as a cucumber, gave me a severe kick, saying, "Get up, you cowardly young rascal; are you not ashamed of yourself?" I did get up, and was ashamed of myself. . . . My pride helped me out of the difficulty, and I flinched no more. . . . By degrees all fear left me; I felt only excitement and anger; and when we (a lot I had to do with it!) drove the enemy back in the utmost confusion, wasn't I proud!'

After some six or seven months of this work Hobart was again appointed to a ship on the South American station, and had the good fortune to be with a captain whom he describes as 'in every sense a gentleman,' and under whom he 'began to realise that discipline can be maintained without undue severity, to say nothing of cruelty; and that service in the navy could be made a pleasure, as well as a duty to one's country.' The story of his adventures whilst in this ship—of escapes from sharks, affrays with robbers or murderers, elopements with bewitching *señoritas* or amorous *señoras*, duels with jealous rivals—reads almost like pages from a romance, though here told in all soberness of matter of fact, and including a reference to one little bit of brilliant history,[1] when the allied English and French squadron forced the passage of the Parana at Obligado, and

'Captain (afterwards Admiral Sir James) Hope performed the courageous action which covered him with renown for the rest of his life. The enemy had, amongst other defences, placed a heavy iron chain across the river. This chain it was absolutely necessary to remove, and the gallant officer I refer to, who commanded the attacking squadron, set a splendid example to us all, by dashing forward and cutting with a cold chisel the links of this chain. The whole time he was thus at work he was exposed to a tremendous fire, having two men killed and two wounded out of the six he took with him. This deed, now almost forgotten by the public, can never be effaced from the memory of those who

[1] Hobart has here confused two different commissions. The fight at Obligado was in November 1845, three years after the time to which he refers it.

saw it done. That the fight was a severe one is evident from the fact that the vessel I belonged to had 107 shots in her hull, and 35 out of 70 men killed and wounded.'

The implication that Hope personally cut the chain with a cold chisel is correct only in the sense that *qui facit per alium, facit per se.* The hammer and the chisel were (we believe) actually handled by Mr. George Tuck, then an assistant engineer, and long afterwards, for many years, Instructor in Engineering at the Royal Naval College at Portsmouth and at Greenwich.

On returning to England Hobart was appointed to a ship for the Brazilian station, the special object being the suppression of the slave trade. As a preliminary to writing his sketches, he gave full effect to the Carlyle maxim, and 'cleared his mind of cant'; the reader will find in them none of the conventional claims of the negro to be 'a brudder'—a claim, indeed, which is ever most strongly supported by those whose knowledge of the negro is mainly theoretical. Few who have been thrown much amongst them will go farther than Hobart, who does 'not deny that they have souls to be saved'; but otherwise believes 'that their *rôle* in this world is to attend on the white man'; that, in fact, they 'are meant to be drawers of water and hewers of wood.' He thinks—and it is difficult for any one but a faddist not to agree with him—that more good would have been done by regulating the traffic in black ivory, than by prohibiting it, with the necessary result that the merchandize was packed with cruel and abominable compactness, so that much of it perished on the voyage, or had to be thrown overboard for want of water, or when chased by an English cruiser. He tells of one schooner he captured with 460 slaves on board.

'She had been,' he says, 'eighty-five days at sea. They were short of water and provisions. Smallpox, ophthalmia, and diarrhœa in its worst form had broken out among the poor doomed wretches. On opening the hold we saw a mass of arms, legs, and bodies, all crushed together. Many of the bodies to whom these limbs belonged were dead or dying—in fact, when we had made some sort of clearance among them, we found in that fearful hold eleven dead bodies lying among the living freight.'

The horrors of this traffic have been often enough expatiated on; but when we pat our sentimental backs, and flatter ourselves that we, as a nation, did so much to put a stop to it, it is worth while remembering that this very acute observer expresses him-

self as 'sceptical of the benefits conferred upon the African race by our blockade.'

Hobart was, however, sent to cruise, not to moralise; and, being entrusted with the command of three boats, he carried out his duty with such ability and with such success, that he speedily became an object for the animosity of the slave-dealing Brazilians. On one occasion, when on shore, he was attacked by two Cuban bloodhounds, whom their master had let slip on him. Fortunately he had his gun with him, and scattered the brains of the leading dog when within five yards of him. This checked the other, and a sailor, who had hastened to the rescue, shot him also. The object of this murderous assault was to enable a vessel, which was daily expected, to run her cargo. Hobart, having escaped from his enemies on shore, succeeded in capturing her with about six hundred slaves on board. 'As they had made a very rapid and prosperous voyage, they were in a somewhat better state than those on board the last capture. Still their state was disgusting enough. Ophthalmia had got a terrible hold of the poor wretches; in many cases the patient was stone-blind.'

After this, Hobart was sent to cruise in company with the boats of another ship, under the orders of a lieutenant whom he here designates A. C. It will not be difficult for those who are curious to fill up the blank; it is enough for us to call attention to the homage which Hobart renders to this officer for 'a gallant act; such,' he says, 'as I have not seen surpassed during forty years of active service.' They had sighted a large brig running in with a fresh breeze. A. C. was in the leading boat, and, attempting to cut her off, got close under her bows and sprang on board. Those in the boat were unable to catch hold, and she went fast astern. A. C. was left alone on the deck. He ran aft, shot the man at the helm, and, taking his place, put the helm down with his leg, whilst with his remaining pistol he kept the crew at bay. The brig was thus thrown up in the wind, was overtaken by the boats, and captured after a short resistance, in which Hobart received a nasty wound in the hand. As to A. C., he says,—

'All the reward he got, beyond the intense admiration of those who saw him, was a bad attack of small-pox from the diseased animals (there is no other name for negroes in the state they were in) on board the slave-vessel, which somewhat injured the face of one of the handsomest men I ever saw. He is now an admiral, has done many gallant acts since then, but none could beat what he did on that memorable morning.'

It was apparently a little after this that Hobart was sent with a prize to Demerara, where he found that the soldier-officers, in attempting to 'withstand the dreadful monotony of doing nothing, had taken to living rather too well,' with the natural consequence that 'many a fine fellow had been carried off by yellow fever.' Warned by their example, Hobart varied the amusement, and fell desperately in love with the Governor's daughter. Now, in Hobart's own words—

'The Governor was a very great swell, a General, a K.C.B., &c., and his daughter was a mighty pretty girl, much run after by the garrison; so it was thought great impertinence on my part, as a humble sub-lieutenant, to presume to make love to the reigning, if not the only beauty in the place. However, audacity carried me on, and I soon became No. 1 in the young lady's estimation. I used to ride with her, spent the evenings in the balcony of Government House with her, sent her flowers every morning, and so on, till at last people began to talk, and steps were taken by her numerous admirers to stop my wild career.'

He was accordingly publicly and grossly insulted by one of his rivals, whom he forthwith called out, 'and the next morning put a ball into his ankle, which prevented him dancing for a long time to come.' He goes on:—

'On returning home after the hostile meeting, I found a much more formidable adversary in the shape of the Governor himself, who was stamping furiously up and down the verandah of my apartment. He received me with, "What the devil do you mean, young sir, by making love to my daughter? You are a mere boy. What means have you got?" After the old gentleman's steam had gone down a little, I replied, "Really, General, I hardly know how to answer you. Your daughter and I are very good friends, the place is most detestably dull, there is nothing to do; and if we amuse ourselves with a little love-making, surely there can be no great harm." This rejoinder of mine made things worse. I thought the old boy would have had a fit. At last he said, "The mail steamer leaves for England to-morrow; you shall go home by her. I order you to do so." I replied that I should please myself and that I was not under his orders. The General went away uttering threats. After he was gone I thought seriously over the matter. I calculated that my income of 120*l.* a year would scarcely suffice to keep a wife, and I decided to renounce my dream of love. I went to pay a farewell visit to my young lady, but found that she was locked up; so away I went, and soon forgot all about it. Shortly afterwards I heard that the Governor's daughter married the man whose leg I had lamed for his impertinence to me.'

Another reminiscence of the same period is more serious. He

had been put in charge of a captured slaver ordered to the Cape of Good Hope for adjudication, and in her were sent the captain and three of his crew as witnesses. The captain was gentlemanly, a good sailor, a first-rate navigator, and before many days were over Hobart struck up a friendship with him, invited him to join his mess, and let him and his men do pretty well what they liked, taking only the precautions to shut them up at night and to sleep with a pistol under his pillow; but, as the weather was hot, he made his bed in a bunk on deck.

'One evening,' he says, 'I retired to my sleeping-place as usual, after having passed a pleasant chatty evening with my prisoner. I was settling myself to sleep—in fact, I think I was asleep as far as it would be called so, for I had from habit the custom of sleeping with one eye open—when I saw, or felt, the flash of a knife over my head. The entrance to my couch was very limited, so that my would-be murderer had some difficulty in striking the fatal blow. Instinct at once showed me my danger. To draw my pistol from under my pillow was the work of a second; to fire it into the body of the man who was trying to stab me, that of another. A groan and a heavy fall on the deck told me what had happened, and springing out of my sleeping-berth I found my friend the captain lying on his face, dead as a door-nail.'

Two of the other prisoners had meantime got on deck and attacked the quartermaster of the watch, who threw one overboard and floored his fellow just as Hobart came to his support. And, without further adventure, they got to the Cape, where Hobart was near being sent to prison on a charge of murder. On his return to England, after this voyage, he was appointed to the royal yacht, and two years later was promoted to the rank of lieutenant. He was afterwards appointed to a ship in the Mediterranean, where he 'passed for several years the usual humdrum life of a naval officer during times of profound peace.'[1]

The crisis of 1848 found him on the coast of Italy, but his sketches are not intended as history, and his personal share in the transactions which rendered the year memorable was but slight. On the outbreak of the Russian war in 1854 he went up the Baltic as first lieutenant of a paddle-wheel steamer, out of which he was shortly afterwards promoted to an acting vacancy. In this position he shared the disgust and distaste which the Commander-in-Chief inspired in every officer in command of a

[1] The social phase of the Mediterranean at this period was amusingly, though with some exaggeration, described by the late Mr. J. Hannay, in a series of sketches under such titles as 'Sand and Shells,' 'Biscuits and Grog,' &c.

ship; but he was not in a position to know much of the secret springs by which the fleet was regulated, and his remarks have no particular value or importance. From the Baltic he was sent, towards the close of the war, to the Mediterranean in command of a gun-vessel, and he seems to have continued on that station for several years, his stay extending into the reign of the admiral whom he here denotes as Sir W. M.

Sir W. M. had the reputation of being the smartest officer in the navy. We would go farther, and say that he was the smartest officer who had held high command in the navy since the days of Lord St. Vincent, to whom he had many points of resemblance. As his rule was an iron one, and the stress of it fell principally on commanding officers, it is not to be wondered at that there were many who were by no means enthusiastic in his praises; but unimpassioned lookers-on were even then aware of the extent and importance of the reforms which he instituted, and could admire and appreciate the manner in which he enforced cleanliness and order in the ships and among the ships' companies, and rendered it possible to walk in the streets of Malta even when the squadron was giving leave. Still, his methods were exact, or even peculiar, and few days passed by without giving currency to some new story, real or imagined, of which the Commander-in-Chief was the hero. Hobart's little misadventure has merely the exceptional merit of being told and guaranteed by one of the principals. The admiral had given orders for all gun-vessels, such as Hobart commanded, to carry on deck a number of water-casks, which he conceived might be used to float the ship off if she got aground. Hobart having, sorely against his will, lumbered his upper deck in this way, had utilised the casks for his own convenience, and quartered his dogs in them, pending the necessity of turning them to account in the way the admiral proposed; and this was the state of things on board the 'F.' when Sir W. M. determined to inspect the ship. Hobart must tell the rest.

The day of my ship's inspection was evidently not one of my lucky days. To begin with, a horrid little monkey belonging to the crew—amusing himself running about in the hammock-nettings near to the gangway over which the great man had to pass—seeing something he thought unusual, made a rush as the commander-in-chief was stepping on board, stooped down, and deliberately took the cocked hat off his head, dropped it into the sea, then started up the rigging chattering with delight at the mischief he had done. The cocked hat was at once

recovered, wiped dry, and placed in its proper place. The admiral, always stern as a matter of principle, looked, after this incident, sterner than usual, hardly recognised me except by a formal bow, then proceeded to muster the officers and crew. This over, he commenced to walk round the deck. I remarked with pleasure his countenance change when he saw how neatly his pet water-casks were painted and lashed to the inner gunnel of the ship. He said quite graciously, 'I am glad to see, Captain Hobart, that you pay such attention to my orders.' I began to think I was mistaken in my idea of the man; but alas for my exuberance of spirits and satisfaction! while the admiral was closely examining one of his pet casks, his face came almost in contact with the opening of the barrel, when, to his and my horror, a pretty little spaniel put out his head and licked the great man on the nose! I shall never forget the admiral's countenance; he turned blue with anger, drew himself up, ordered his boat to be manned, and walked over the side, not saying a word to any one. The admiral hated dogs, hated sport of all kind, and, after what occurred, I fancy hated me. The very next day I was ordered to the coast of Syria: just what I wanted—to be out of the commander-in-chief's way, and to have some good shooting.[1]

In March 1863 Hobart was advanced to post rank; and, having no expectation of present employment, conceived the idea of utilising his involuntary leisure in a manner at once exciting and profitable, and, under the *nom de guerre* of Captain Roberts, accepted the command of a ship built and fitted out to run the blockade of the Confederate States. The adventures of the ship he related shortly afterwards in a little volume entitled 'Never Caught,' much of which is now incorporated with these sketches. If it was excitement which he was mainly in quest of, he certainly got it in a series of extraordinary and hairbreadth escapes from capture or destruction; but rumour was more false than even she generally is, if he did not also win a very handsome pecuniary reward for his labours and risks; and, indeed, he himself says that 'the captain of a blockade-runner could realise in a month a sum as large as the salary of the Governor of Nassau.' This we may the more readily believe, as it appears that the average profit on Hobart's private ventures was something like 1,000 per cent.,

[1] We remember a somewhat similar instance, when Sir W. M., inspecting a line-of-battle ship, and prying too inquisitively into the recesses of a pigeon-hole between the beams on the main deck, found himself face to face with a guinea-pig that had been established there by one of the midshipmen. On another occasion he slipped unexpectedly on board a ship newly come from the Channel Fleet, and went round her decks in grim silence, which he broke only on the gangway, to say to the commanding officer, 'Your decks are dirty and your hammocks are badly stowed. Good morning.'

independent of the very liberal pay from the owners, whose whole cargo was bringing in a similar profit.

It would be unreasonable to suppose that Hobart, in entering on this service, was not mainly guided by pecuniary considerations, although his predilections were unquestionably in favour of the Confederates, whom he favoured both as maintaining the right of the white man to be free and of the black man to be a slave. Had he been a rich man he might have fought for them: being a poor man, he combined principle and profit, and ran the blockade for them. His merit is not that what he did was mainly for his pecuniary advantage, but that what he undertook to do he did remarkably well; and that in the full stringency of the blockade he successfully made six round trips in and out of Wilmington. Hobart modestly attributes much of this success to luck; but a man of ability, nerve, and ready wit has a way of compelling luck, which goes far to take from it the element of chance. How much of these qualities Hobart was master of appears from almost every page of his narrative, of which the following account of a run into Wilmington may be taken as a sample:—

On our nearing the blockading squadron at nightfall we heard a great deal of firing going on inshore, which we conjectured (rightly, as it afterwards appeared) was caused by the American ships, who were chasing and severely handling a blockade-runner. An idea at once struck me, which I quickly put into execution. We steamed in as fast as we could, and soon made out a vessel ahead that was hurrying in to help her consorts to capture or destroy the contraband. We kept close astern of her, and in this position followed the cruiser several miles. Suddenly the firing ceased, and our pioneer turned out to sea again. As we were by this time very near inshore, we stopped the engines and remained quite still, but unluckily could not make out our exact position. The blockading cruisers were evidently very close in, so we did not like moving about; besides, the pilot was confident that we were close enough to the entrance of the river to enable us to run in when day broke without being in any danger from the enemy. Thus for the remainder of the night we lay quite close to the beach.

And the next day they got in, though not without some further difficulty.

After having made his six successful trips, Hobart gave up his command and returned to England, where the first news he got, as he landed at Southampton, was of the capture of his old ship, whose luck had broken down under her new commander. Having now leisure, and perhaps also some spare cash, Hobart resolved to travel for a year on the Continent; and in the course of his wanderings came to Constantinople. He had letters of introduc-

tion to the Grand Vizier, Fuad Pasha, on whom he accordingly called. It was the time of the rebellion in Crete, and the conversation turned on the systematic running of the Turkish blockade of the island by Greek vessels. Hobart thought it could be stopped without much difficulty, and the next day was invited to take service under the Ottoman Government. Hobart considered for a short time, and answered, 'Well, your Highness, I am ready, if the terms offered me are satisfactory.' They proved 'most satisfactory,' and he accepted. The engagement was for five years, but was renewed and renewed, and was still in force at the time of his death.

He was at once sent to Crete to put a stop to the blockade-running. On arriving on his station he found that the Turkish officers, in their ignorance of international law, had permitted themselves to be hoaxed with various newly coined regulations, which practically rendered the blockade nugatory. He found also that the revolt was entirely fostered by Greek intrigue, and was dependent on Greek support; 'that if the blockade-running was stopped, the insurgents would at once lay down their arms for want of food and warlike stores.' He determined to put a stop to it, and with a small selected squadron left Suda Bay as though on a cruise, and when out of sight steamed straight for Syra, 'the principal delinquent in fitting out and sending blockade-runners to Crete.' Circumstances alter cases: to look for blockade-runners near their starting-point at Syra seemed most fitting: a short time before, the action of the Americans in cruising near the Bahamas seemed most questionable. By the next morning he was off Syra, and, as day broke, sighted 'a regular blockade-runner' about a mile to seaward. On a blank gun being fired, to bring her to, she answered with a shotted Armstrong, cutting away the stanchion of the bridge on which Hobart was standing. The vessel made good her run into Syra, keeping up a running fight with two Turkish despatch-boats; but Hobart was quite satisfied, knowing that the chase had been guilty of piracy, and had given him a legal pretext for laying an embargo on all the shipping of the port. The position was thus reversed: Syra was closely blockaded; and 'within three days, no blockade-runners arriving at Crete, the insurgents laid down their arms and begged for bread.'

On his return to Constantinople Hobart was specially well received, not only by the Sultan, who promoted him to the rank of full Admiral, but by the representatives of the European

Powers. England alone stood aloof. 'The Admiralty,' he says, 'went so far as to tell me that if I did not immediately return, my name would be erased from the list of naval officers. An officer of high rank, a member of the Board of Admiralty, wrote to me a semi-official letter, in which he said: "Unless you leave the Turkish service, you will be scratched off the list." Feeling exceedingly hurt at such treatment . . . I wrote to him: "You may scratch, and be damned." This letter was, I think, very unfairly quoted against me some time afterwards in the House of Commons. However, my name was erased from the list of naval officers, and was not replaced there for several years.'[1]

It was with the Russian war of 1877 that Hobart's name first became generally known, and the story of his career at that time would be a history of the naval side of the war, which our limits do not permit us to undertake. In these sketches he has merely glanced at some of his adventurous achievements, the relations of which are still too long to quote—too detailed to abstract. It is perhaps of more real interest to note that, in his opinion, the war, as a war of invasion, might have been prevented if the Turkish naval force had been properly utilised.[2] What he says is this:—

Some few days before the war broke out I was sent to examine the Danube from a professional point of view; and it was soon made clear to me that much could be done in the way of defending that great estuary had nautical experience and the splendid material of which the Turkish sailor is made of been properly utilised. But I found that pig-headed obstinacy and the grossest ignorance prevailed in the councils of those who had supreme command in that river. I found that my advice, and that of competent Turkish officers, was entirely ignored; and that few, if any, proper steps were taken to prevent the enemy's progress into Roumania, and, later on, his passing the Danube almost unopposed. On the day that war was declared, I was at Rustchuk, the headquarters of the Turkish army. On that occasion I made a final effort, by making propositions which events have proved would have arrested the advance of the enemy. I was simply told to mind my own business, and ordered to immediately rejoin my ships, which were at the moment lying at the Sulina mouth of the Danube.

J. K. LAUGHTON.

[1] Hobart is here, as before, confusing dates. His name was not erased from the navy list till after the outbreak of the Russian war, nine or ten years later than the time he is here speaking of.

[2] Lord Dundonald (with whose career we have already compared Hobart's) held very similar views as to the possibility of preventing the Peninsular War.

A Modest Defence of the Royal Academy.

'LOOK here; we're going to do for them at last,' cried my friend, Mr. Richard Tinto, bursting into the study where I was striving with a sonnet.

'Them? Who? Oh, the Academy, I suppose?' I replied.

'Yes, sir, we shall bring them down on their old knees,' cried Dick, tossing me a paper. 'You see they *will* be had. Hunt is on them, and Crane, and Clausen.'

I read the document Dick offered me; it was the celebrated manifesto of these famous painters, with their proposal for a rival show.

'But how is the thing to work?' I asked. 'The Academy has got the rooms, and got the men, and got the money too. How are you to draw the public to Mr. Hunt's new National show? If they want to see Mr. Hunt's pictures they can go to Bond Street, though I'm sure the Academy would have been only too proud to exhibit his "Innocents Abr——" I mean his "Holy Innocents."'

'Likely that he'd let them!' said Dick.

'Well, but he may not get on much better with the new opposition affair. Then the public knows where the Walter Cranes are—at the Grosvenor, of course. I daresay Mr. Clausen exhibits there too. But the public wants to see Millais, and Leighton, and Tadema, and Herkomer, and Leader, and Vicat Cole, and Colin Hunter, and MacWhirter, and Orchardson, and Pettie——'

'Confounded crew,' interrupted Dick, very rudely.

'*Chacun à son goût*, my boy, but that is the public *goût*, and when it gets *that* for its shilling, and plenty more, why it won't patronise your opposition, Mr. Crane and all. Besides, where's your money? You ask people to guarantee it, but the public is content, the swell artists are content, and I don't see where the tin is to come from for a rival establishment.

'Oh, you throw cold water on everything!' cried Dick.

'Under such showers,' I said, 'the bud of genius blossoms into the flowers of prosperity.'

But he was gone!

After Dick left me I began to think about the Royal Academy, and the artists, and the public, an old worn topic, but one that keeps 'returning like the peewit.'

The Royal Academy, like tall hats, the Bench of Bishops, tips to railway porters, the House of Lords, and many other institutions is constantly on its trial. *Multi sunt qui persequuntur me*, the Academy might say, and in the person of some of its members it has lifted up its voice against them. I would deprecate, if accents so modest could win a hearing, the disendowment and disestablishment of the Royal Academy. When Dean Swift ventured to publish some reasons for not instantly abolishing the Christian Religion, he showed that persons of wit and humour would be deprived, by such inconsiderate action, of a serviceable and perennial butt. The Academy supplies unsuccessful artists with the same constant and comfortable object of attack, and I conceive that if the Academy falls, the British public itself will be in considerable danger. As things at present exist, when Mr. Richard Tinto does not sell his performances, he simply devotes his leisure to reviling the Forty. He taunts them with jealousy, stupidity, respectability, success, opulence, tuft-hunting, Philistinism. He caricatures them; he writes letters about them to the papers; in all societies, and especially over his pipe and whisky-and-water, he raises up his voice against the blinded, miserable men who don't make him the very thing he despises—an R.A. By this course of conduct Richard becomes a weariness to the somewhat large majority of human beings who are either Academicians themselves or are not artists of any description. When one meets Tinto, life turns into a game of hide-and-seek. Your whole interest is bent on evading the subject of the Royal Academy. You would rather talk of the Royal Family itself, though *that* leads him straight to the Prince of Wales and the Academy dinner. You guide the discourse in the direction of Newmarket and the Cambridgeshire, but *that* reminds him that Mr. Frith once painted 'The Derby Day,' and off he goes on the vulgarity and popularity-hunting of the Academy. You speak of poetry, but from the sorrow of Chatterton he glides, by an easy transition, to all the martyrdoms of which the Academy has been guilty, to all the glorious outsiders who perished in their pride owing to Academic cruelty. In fact Dick's talk is a perpetual prose 'Adonais,' in which the

Academy takes the unattractive *rôle* of the *Quarterly Review*, as denounced by Shelley. The very private characters and talents of the Academicians do not escape the wrath of Dick Tinto, though in other matters he is far from being Pharisaical. He derides their dinner parties, he has anecdotes about their blameless models, he believes in Ghosts which haunt their studios. And yet he lives in a constant surprise—the innocent Richard—that the Academy does not elect him at each new vacancy. As if constant abuse of a club and its members were the way to avoid blackballs!

The invectives of Tinto (he is an *impressioniste* himself, and complains that there are no *impressionistes* in the Forty)—the invectives of Tinto have often made me regard the Academy as an invaluable institution. It answers to the 'buffer states,' which we read of in modern political discussions. Bulgaria is, or lately was, a buffer state, or, rather, artificial commonwealth between two jealous Powers. A buffer state is likely to have plenty of history, and not to be over happy. In the same way the Academy acts as a buffer between the Wrath of Tinto and the general public. Even if there were no Royal Academy, Tinto would not be a success. The public does not care for *impressionisme*, and, above all, does not care for the performance of Dick Tinto. That is not his fault, nor theirs, but merely the fault of the nature of things. He is an ingenious artist, the public is a good public, but there is no 'pre-established harmony' between them. They are fated not to suit each other. Now Tinto and his friends are pleased to lay the blame of this on the Academy, and against the Academy he directs the arrows of his tongue. Were there no Academy, he would simply turn round and revile the dull Philistine public, you and me, Tom, Dick, and Harry—all of us! I know he would, because, to be open with the reader, we all do it, *nous autres*, we poets and novelists. There is, thank goodness, no Royal Academy of Letters. If there were, each of us failures would perpetually gnash his teeth against that harmless and dignified body of men. I have often seen, in my mind's eye, the Royal Academy of Letters. The Duke of Argyll would be a member, so would Mr. Lecky, Archdeacon Farrar, Professor Huxley, Mr. Herbert Spencer, Mr. Edmund Yates, Mr. Matthew Arnold, Mr. Burnand, Mr. W. S. Gilbert, the Bishop of Peterborough, Mr. James Knowles, Lord Tennyson, Canon Liddon, and the Author of 'John Inglesant, Gentleman.' How we would rate the R. A. L., we others; how we would defy and denounce it, and long, and yearn, and intrigue to become

members! When our books did not sell, when the public neglected our lyrics, and never looked at our novels, how we would blame the Royal Academy of Letters! Now, as there is no such academy, we have nobody to blame but the critics, a little, and the public, 'this great stupid public,' as Mr. Thackeray called it. Perhaps a very few of us blame ourselves and frankly acknowledge that we are not very witty, nor very learned, nor very imaginative, and that if we are failures, it is merely because there is no particular reason why we should succeed. The artist in oils, or water-colours, or clay, or *niello*, or what not, has a safety valve we lack. He does not blame the public, he does not lay the fault on himself—far from it—he simply execrates the confounded Academy. Thus, as a butt, a safety valve, a flattering unction to self-esteem, the Academy is simply invaluable, and to boycott, or disestablish, or otherwise get rid of the Academy, would be to deprive artists of pleasures which they would sadly miss. It is just the same in France with their more glorious and ancient Academy. The literary men ridicule the Forty, despise them, fight with them as the Apostle fought with beasts, fawn on them, intrigue with them, and sometimes, like Balzac and Théophile Gautier, are left outside after all.

This is all very well, it may be said, as an ironical view of the matter. But the view is even, to a certain extent, correct. The mere existence of the Academy gives an extraordinary, though often painful and bitter, interest to the painter's career. In the Academy, to tell a truth which many artists do not seem to suspect, and which is the best Apology for the institution, there is really nothing but a concentrated Public. The Forty, electing themselves, are necessarily biassed by all sorts of personal and social considerations, and prefer, very properly, a good fellow to a 'gruncher.' Yet they succeed, after all, in being almost perfect representatives of the British Public, and its tastes and likings. Of late some artists have got up, as we have seen, an agitation against the Academy, and their complaint is, to some extent, that the Academy stands between the public and them. The Academy is the great recognised Art Shop of this country, marked (like Crown Derby) with the valuable Royal Trade-mark. To have a good place always in Burlington House is to reach the purchasing and praising public. Not to have that place is often (not always) to miss the purchasing public. Therefore, when that place is denied to an artist he naturally decides that the Academy comes between him and the world—between him and his daily bread. Such a belief,

when sincerely held, is almost maddening. Happily, as I have said, in the profession of letters, no author's life can be poisoned by this hatred of a middleman. We all appeal straight to the world, and if we do not succeed, either our own incompetence, or the general taste, or bad luck, is to blame. But the artist thinks the Academy is to blame. He is not so right as he supposes. The Academy does not come so much as he thinks between him and the public. The Academy *is* the public. On the whole its judgments exactly coincide with the general taste—with the view of *le moyen homme artistique.* The Academy would in vain hang the works of our unpopular talent in the best places. The Academy does not do so, because it is so representative of the average multitude. But, even if it did so, the Academy could not win the average multitude to admire the unpopular talent. The Academy cannot lead taste, and yet one of the chief complaints is that it does not lead—that it is slow to recognise new genius.

Without mentioning names one may give an example. The *Pall Mall Gazette*, last summer, offered prizes for the persons who should best represent the average taste of the average Briton. Among the questions set was the task of naming the best landscape of the year. About a dozen were named, and among them were neither of the landscapes which a refined and critical taste would probably have preferred. These paintings did not receive a single vote. One of them was well hung, the other was badly hung, but it is certain that neither had the qualities which catch the general eye and please the majority. The truth seems to be that the kind of talent, or genius, which does not suit the Academy, or wins the Academy very slowly, does not suit the public; or, like spring in the North, 'comes slowly up that way.'

There are men of great genius in art, and (more rarely) in literature, who fail to please the multitude of their contemporaries. Millet, in France, is a notorious example. A failure with the public, he was also no success in the Salon, though the Salon is organised and governed in a manner much more popular and less exclusive than our Academy. The public must be educated into liking, or pretending to like, such a talent. Now, to educate the public thus is not the function of an Academy, or of the Salon; it is the function of critics and amateurs.

The natural public taste is for Mr. Frith and M. Bouguereau; it is not for Millet, or Rodin, or Mr. Gilbert, or Mr. Burne Jones. An Academy, as, after all, a representative institution, follows, or but by a pace or two precedes, public opinion. Every original

talent must be novel, surprising, even *bizarre*. Most members of the general public must stare and laugh at art with these qualities. Every Academy of prosperous middle-aged conventional artists must dislike what rises against their canons. I am surprised at the chances which the Academy gave young Mr. Millais in the old Preraffaelite days. I am surprised they did not mark his works with 'a big, big D,' and reject them. It is not the tardiness of the Academy in admitting genius that amazes me, but their ultimate surrender of the citadel, their opening of the gates to the young conqueror. Is Theology so ready to receive what is new—is Science, or is Literature? Had Darwin at once an unopposed success, or even Carlyle, or Lord Tennyson, or Mr. Browning?

This tardiness, this reluctance to admit *novæ res*, to make concession to revolution, is not such a very bad thing, as every constitutional politician will allow. An Academy which shifted with every wind of *impressionisme*, would be a very useless institution. New ideas, new methods, need, like Byron, 'something craggy to wreak their minds on.' The Academy is pretty craggy. If an original artist can conquer the Academy, there must be some real merit in him, some power of persistence.

So far this may have been a kind of defence of the Academy. But that institution necessarily has the defects of its qualities. It is a close corporation. It has a sort of monopoly. True, there are other exhibitions of every grade; how many the critic knows as he pads the weary hoof in Bond Street, or, as the Rig Veda says, 'perhaps even *he* knows not.' True, an artist of courage and power can dispense with the Academy. Mr. Rossetti, Mr. Burne Jones, and others have won fame, and even some fortune, with no help from the Academy. The Grosvenor Gallery has been of great service; the Suffolk Street Gallery is not without its merits; Mr. Whistler can take very good care of himself. I do not believe that an artist of merit can be 'crushed by the Academy,' as people say, though he would make a better income more easily if he were an Academician. Still, the Academy is a close corporation, and has a monopoly. What does it do with all the shillings it collects? This is a great mystery, even an Apologist must admit; and a Royal Commission might laudably investigate a branch of knowledge so interesting and so obscure.

Once more, the Academy is, I have argued, only the public 'writ small,' and it is, therefore, of a spirit far too commonplace,

commercial, inartistic. Who can deny that many of its members paint pictures which are mere commercial speculations? There is no way of preventing that. There is no method by which the Academy can be brought to prefer art that is delicate, refined, spiritual, that has sentiment and poetry, to art that is slapdash and full of false and hasty emphasis. I know not why it is that the Scotch school of landscape should often lay on its hues so thick, and with so heavy a hand. There are exceptions, and yet this school, so favoured and successful in the Academy, seems to me (for one) to have a plentiful lack of delicacy, of poetry, of taste, and therefore of permanent merit. Scotch landscape often reminds me of Scotch pulpit eloquence: it is sturdy, copious, rich; has plenty of body, plenty of noise and rhetoric, but Dr. Chalmers is not in the same kingdom of art as Massillon. Yet, even in preferring this art, the Academy represents the public. What is a popular preacher? What are his merits? Is he not often pretentious, blatant; does he not force the note; is not his colour gaudy and his style Corinthian? Yet he is popular. The people 'will have it so'; and so a kind of painting is popular which cannot live nor last, which will not bear to be filtered through the judgments of amateurs and critics. It is popular, and the Academy (being popular itself, after all) gives it ample space and honour.

The Academy could not live and flourish if it did not meet the taste of the general. The taste of the general will never delight in art that is wholly novel and original. For this reason all attempts to upset the Academy, as in the schemes of Mr. Holman Hunt and Mr. Walter Crane, must fail. These schemes depend on raising large sums of money, as all schemes must when war is to be levied on the opulent. Whence is the money to come? Not from the public, the public likes the art the Academy gives it, and likes it the better the more commonplace it is in character and the more obvious in its appeal. It likes pictures of pointers breaking into the luncheon-basket on the moors, pictures of babies, pictures of bishops, pictures of fox-terriers fishing for perch. The public, happily, can also appreciate the downright mastery of Sir John Millais, and the extraordinary craftsmanship of Mr. Alma Tadema, concerning which, Blake (in a spirit of prophecy) wrote a very rude epigram. As the public gets all it really wants from the Academy, it will not subscribe very freely to an association for giving it (to be plain) what it does not want at all. Artists already successful will not be of a more subscribing humour, artists who are not successful cannot

provide the sinews of war. No, unless legislation interfere, the Academy holds the field and is safe enough from the malcontents.

Probably legislation should interfere with some Academic privileges. Even the Academy falls short of ideal perfection. Certain peculiarities of the Academy are notorious. The privilege of hanging eight pictures on the line enables senile Academicians to cover the walls with vast and portentous canvases. Last summer the space occupied by Academic foibles, not always excused by old age, was rather too large. The national show was a thing to smile upon. Acres of wall were covered with designs from which a friendly writer must avert his gaze. Like the Recording Angel, I drop a tear on the Catalogue.

To mention names is superfluous, would be invidious, and might be dangerous. It is certain that the privileges of Academicians must be limited in the interests of fair play and national art. It is more difficult to see how Academicians, as yet by no means well stricken in years, are to be prevented from exhibiting canvases which would be justly rejected (but for the artist's name) at any minor gallery in London. The Academy may pass a self-denying ordinance, as the President and its best members are known to wish to do, otherwise restraint must come from without. The character of some of the pictures bought with the funds of the Chantrey Bequest is also a marvel to the perplexed race of man. Perhaps they are purchased with the benevolent purpose of hiding them for ever from human view. This, at least, is a charitable suggestion.

The Academy is far too exclusively devoted to the interests of painters in oils. The truly English and beautiful art of water-colour drawing should entitle a worthy artist to election, even if he never touches oils at all. There should be room for men at once so able and so popular as Leech, Cruikshank, and Du Maurier; in fact, room for all the plastic arts in due proportion to their gravity, excellence, and endurance. The question of teaching is a separate question, and requires a separate discussion by experts. Meanwhile, with all her faults, do not let us attack the Academy as if she were a 'haggard and heartless haridan,' as Mr. Swinburne might say. Our best men, our greatest glories, have belonged to her—Reynolds, and Turner, Millais, and Leighton, and Landseer. If Gainsborough quarrelled with her, let us remember the reconciliation of his dying words, 'We are all going up to Heaven together.' All true artists are united, after all, by something higher than an interest in having so many

places on the line. There have been men—Blake and Rossetti, for example—who were probably better outside of an Academy. Every good artist, and true, can do without her; most of those who revile her would in no case win contemporary success, many of them would fail utterly, Academy or no Academy. Were I to advise a young painter I would counsel him to abandon his profession for some more profitable field of usefulness. Times are hard, trade is bad, to do without modern pictures is an easy economy. I confess that, even if I were a millionaire, I could deny myself examples of modern English art. But if my young friend persisted in his Vocation, I would urge him to paint his best, to study his hardest, and never to give a moment's thought to the Academy. The mere existence of the Academy so embitters many painters whose spleen would otherwise find no point on which to concentrate itself, that entire indifference and independence is the only safe path for the young artist. If he keeps worrying about the Academy, about success, he can no more be happy than a pretty girl who should incessantly distress herself with the desire to get invited to Marlborough House. Not Marlborough House, nor Burlington House, but sound work and a kindly life and ways are the true goal of art, as of the beauty for which art is a constant expression of our gratitude to Heaven. I am not a professional painter, but I can quote a painter to this effect. Mr. Alfred Stevens writes: 'Il faudrait avoir le courage de ne se préoccuper ni des succès de Salon, ni de l'opinion de la presse, ni de l'éventualité des récompenses, et ne s'inquiéter que de se contenter soi-même.'

Love's Silence.

SWEET, shall I ask thee why thou art so still,
Gazing afar into the deeps of space,
With shadows of the twilight on thy face,
And eyes that quick with dewy moisture fill?
Why is thy laughter's mellow rippling rill
Silent and dumb? What chrism of perfect grace
Shall fall upon those lips and find a place
To bid their accents on the dusk to thrill?
Why art thou voiceless, love? Ah, speak to me
With speech that ever into music grows.
She turns her eyes, that hold me in their thrall,
As dark and sweet as night upon the sea,
Saying, while one swift look upon me glows,
'Love is unutterable and is all.'

W. J. HENDERSON.

An English Vendetta.

'GIVE me half the fortune your father made out of my brains, and I'll hear you.'

'I don't understand this. Did you not accept 5,000*l.* for your invention? In fact, sir, I have seen letters of enthusiastic gratitude which you addressed to Sir Philip at the time. Do you mean that they are forgeries?'

'I didn't know the value of my discovery; your father did, and he bought for that wretched sum an invention that has earned him half a million. I say that I'll have no help from you, Frederick Staymer. If I can hurt your father no other way, I'll starve, and my death will avenge me!'

'I cannot argue with this spirit, Mr. Keeley, and, if you alone were concerned, I should say no more. But you have a little daughter, I understand?'

'Don't think of me, father! If you took a morsel of dry bread from them, it would choke me.'

Young Staymer turned in astonishment: he thought they two were alone in the miserable room. Upright by the window stood a slender girl, whose large eyes burned and thin lips quivered with passionate excitement. He crossed the narrow floor, and seated himself on the small bed beside her.

'My child,' said he, 'you are terribly prejudiced against us. Do I look a villain?'

'No,' she answered sullenly, 'but you come from your father.'

'Ay,' cried the sick man, 'and go back to him! Tell him what you've seen. Give him my daughter's answer: if we took a morsel of dry bread from you or yours, it would choke us.'

'Have you no kinder word?' Frederick asked of the girl.

She did not answer.

'Then I will leave you, Mr. Keeley,' he said, rising. 'Five thousand pounds will be deposited this afternoon at the Bank of England in your name and this young lady's, if you will give it me—to be hers in case of your death.'

'I refuse the name.'

'Well, probably I can do without it. But mark me, sir, this is no restitution, no acknowledgment of a claim. Sir Philip gives it in remembrance of his former association with you, as a sign of respect for your great abilities and your ill-success in life.'

'And I throw it back,' the dying man cried, rising, gaunt and ragged, on his mattress, eyes aflame and thin cheeks lit with the glow of fever. 'I throw it back in his teeth—I wish it were five thousand pounds weight in gold! Have I asked anything from you or yours? I scorn you too deeply, I know you too well, and my wrongs are too bitter! I accept no restitution in this world, Frederick Staymer, lest it should be placed to your father's credit on high, and spare him one pang of the vengeance which a just heaven will exact. Amen!'

'Good-bye, little girl! You know my name, and my address is easily found always. Remember that a fortune is waiting you at the Bank of England from this day. It would be useless to say more to you, Mr. Keeley, but I wish you well.'

When Staymer had gone, the child came across and kissed her father, nestling to him; but they did not speak for a long while.

'I have done wrong, Amy.'

'No, no!'

'Ay, I have, pet. It's a small thing for a man to be brave and firm when he is doomed. But I should have thought of my daughter, as he said. A fraction of the sum which is my right would be comfort and happiness to you. I've ruined your life with my obstinacy.'

'Don't imagine such a thing, father. What I said to the young man is truth—their money would choke me!'

'Ah! I began the mischief long since. Heaven forgive me! It's sad that a child of your age should know the wickedness of men, and cherish bitter feelings. But the money is there, safe in the Bank of England. When I'm gone, darling, your aunt will take you to claim it. I think she's honest, but trust no lawyer—don't trust her too far.'

'Father, I——'

'I am tired, Amy. Kiss me now, and let me sleep till Jane comes. It will be wearisome to explain to her, and this excitement has disturbed me terribly.'

A long kiss they exchanged, and the girl left him. She withdrew to her book at the window, and read till the light failed; then dropped asleep.

The opening of the door aroused her. 'Is that you, Aunt Jane? Father's dozing,' she whispered.

'I can feel my way,' a voice replied; 'don't move.' But the next moment a chair fell crash.

'It's nothing, father,' Amy cried. 'Aunt Jane's come.'

But there was no answer, and in breathless alarm she struck a match.

The sick man lay still. Amy ran to him.

'Oh! Aunt, aunt, come!' In the darkness they leaned over him.

'My poor little girl, he's out of his troubles now,' Mrs. Dermot said with rough tenderness. 'I'll be a mother to you, so far as my poor means go.'

It is needless to describe the scene. That night Amy was taken to her aunt's lodging, crowded with children already. Three days afterwards she attended her father's funeral.

When Sir Philip Staymer heard his son's report, softened though it was, he fell into a passion.

'I gave you my word, Fred, and I don't withdraw from it. There is the cheque! But I knew how it would be. Keeley is a malignant fool, and always was. Did you show him his own letter in answer to this raving?'

'He is in no condition to argue. It's enough that our conscience is clear, sir, and that you can justify every part of your conduct if summoned.'

'But I'm sorry you didn't read him the letter which says that he had tried every means to launch his invention, and would hand it over to me *in toto* for a thousand pounds. With that offer before me, Fred, I gave the fellow five thousand, and now he declares I swindled him.'

'I know the truth, but that was a reason for not pressing it."

'Well, take your cheque at once, or I may repent—the ungrateful ass!'

'I have it safe, sir,' Fred answered, laughing. 'Did you know Keeley had a daughter?'

'I know nothing about his affairs. How old is she?'

'Very much too young to justify the suspicion which I see in your look, sir. A very pretty child of ten or thereabouts, and even more interesting than pretty. I should like to feel that she was provided for, independent of her father.'

'What! The settlement I have made is more than enough—five thousand pounds more than enough. One can see, young fellow, that you were born with a silver spoon in your mouth. When you have earned as much money as that, you won't listen as patiently as I do to a proposal for giving it away.'

'But look at my notion, sir. The settlement arranged is cash out of your pocket. I only ask you to make me an advance—capitalising two hundred a year out of the sum you kindly allow me.'

'How much is that?'

'A thousand, I believe, sir.'

'I give you credit for an honest belief to that effect. But I had occasion to look through your accounts the other day, and I find that in the three years since you came of age I have paid, one way or another, very nearly seven thousand for you.'

'Bless my soul!'

'I will show the figures. You see, it's a monstrous absurdity to talk of deducting two hundred from your allowance. Besides, Fred, one should be reasonable in charity. I must refuse to do anything more.'

The young man did not press his point. Conscious that even the large sum mentioned had gone in pocket-money and defraying current debts, he was glad to drop the subject. This revelation astonished and shocked him. He resolved to ascertain his liabilities, to pay them off gradually and to incur no more. But this determination applied to the future: for the present, Fred had no idea of abandoning his notion. He knew very well how to raise money, and within the week an additional five thousand was paid into the Bank of England for the sole benefit of James Keeley's daughter.

It was characteristic of the boy that Fred made no further inquiries. Returning from the Bank on foot, he met a very humble funeral, and, in the sympathetic fashion learned abroad, lifted his hat carelessly. He did not look at the cab which followed that poor hearse. But a child therein saw him, and marked the unusual action. To her it seemed a mockery of the dead, a last insult of malice and wrongdoing towards its victim. Against her will she had cherished a kindly sentiment towards Fred Staymer since that terrible day. It vanished. Amy was glad to think she had kept her secret, and no one knew the fortune lying in her name at the Bank of England.

In the years that followed these two lived as fate and circumstances decreed. Staymer's regiment was ordered to India; it was a chance of recovery from financial disasters and expensive habits, and Fred wished to profit by it. But Sir Philip, growing more feeble daily, could not bear to part with his son, and he exchanged into the wealthiest and most desperate corps of plungers of the British service.

Amy passed four years with Mrs. Dermot, who kept a very small and very miscellaneous shop in a back street at Clapham. She looked after the children, and did more than her share of the housework, as the unchivalrous customs of woman exact from a girl-relative sheltered in charity. Upon occasion she served behind the counter, and by degrees the lending library which formed part of Mrs. Dermot's business fell under her direction.

James Keeley had left very little in the way of furniture which his sister thought worth removal, but a number of old and stupid volumes she took away simply as 'dummies' to fill her shelves. The child did not protest, though her young sense of justice was outraged. Two years afterwards Mrs. Dermot found an opportunity to buy a cargo of novels very cheap, and then she offered those unmarketable books at the rag-and-bone shop of the neighbourhood. Fortunately, the unlearned dealer was not anxious to close, and Amy heard the proposal in time.

To urge sentimental associations after the lapse of so many months would have been futile; she simply represented that her father believed his volumes to be worth money, and obtained permission, after much trouble, to put some of them among the toys and sweets in the window. Mrs. Dermot submitted impatiently, and day by day, as no purchaser came forward, she declared with growing vehemence that they should be sold for waste paper. Kind-hearted in her fashion, however, and just a little hopeful to the last that something might turn up, the good woman waited still, vowing every night that the rubbish should be cleared away; but every morning action was postponed. So it chanced that the opportunity came at length, and the man of destiny appeared.

He was not a romantic personage at all. For some days Amy had noticed a shabby veteran who lingered at the window. Presently he entered to ask the price of a duodecimo; in a tumult of hope and fear she named half-a-crown. 'Ridiculous!' exclaimed the veteran, and marched out. Amy did not dare to tell this incident. She bitterly reproached herself for fixing the price so high; but when, two days afterwards, the stranger returned, she was shrewd enough to draw a conclusion.

'Well, my dear, have you thought it over?'

'Yes, sir. I made a mistake. That little volume is five shillings.'

The old gentleman showed a frank amusement. He sat down, laughing.

'Now tell the truth, my child. I hope you always tell the truth?'

'I hope so, sir.'

'What is the real price you are told to ask for that book?'

'I am not told to ask any price at all. I guess.'

'Oh, sharp little girl! How did your mother get them?'

'My mother is dead, sir, and they belonged to my father, and Mrs. Dermot is going to sell them for waste-paper—with his name in them too—to be torn up!'

'Well, well, child, they sha'n't be torn up.'

At this moment Mrs. Dermot appeared.

'I am trying to strike a bargain for these old books, ma'am. What do you ask?'

'A pound apiece, aunt!' Amy cried.

'A pound apiece! You must excuse this little girl, sir, please. She's not clever.' Mrs. Dermot was observing his expression, and did not know what to make of it. 'Not a pound apiece,' she continued, doubtfully; 'I'd say—I'd say two-pounds-ten for the lot.'

'Here it is, ma'am,' the old gentleman replied, with a merry look at Amy. 'You needn't give me a receipt. Twenty-four volumes—I know them all. I'll send my servant immediately to carry them away. Now, I don't agree with you that this young lady is not clever, and I back my opinion by making her a present of two-pounds-ten for her share of her father's property—for herself, ma'am, you understand. Good-bye, little girl! I shall come to see you occasionally.'

The servant, who arrived in a cab, haughtily informed Mrs. Dermot that his master was very rich, a widower with one child, and a great scholar. Nearly every day for some weeks he visited the shop, buying all sorts of rubbish, and chatting with Amy. Then he vanished for two years; but on his return the visits recommenced, and Mrs. Dermot began to think there was some purpose in them. Amy had greater reason to suspect the same thing.

At length it was declared. Mr. Thomas announced his name, and asked a private interview with the aunt.

'I have a daughter, ma'am,' he began, 'about the age of Miss Amy. She is not very bright, but very gentle and loving, and she is heiress to a great fortune. Various circumstances make it awkward for me to provide her with the amusements and companionship which are still more necessary because, as I have said, my Louisa has not the resources in herself which other children enjoy. Now it has occurred to me that if you would permit your little niece to bear my child company, it might be advantageous

to everybody concerned. Let us try it for a month, she spending the day at my house and returning here to sleep. I should add that the girls will be treated quite alike, share the same lessons, and wear the same dress, if you do not object.'

A pang of maternal envy shot through Mrs. Dermot's bosom. Why was not this chance offered to one of her own many daughters? But the unworthy feeling did not last. The same afternoon she paid a visit to Mr. Thomas, saw his pretty child, formed a high opinion of the housekeeper, and came to terms. At the end of the month's trial a definite engagement was concluded, and Amy went to live, for a time unfixed, in the big beautiful house on Clapham Common.

Her young mistress—though there was no hint of such relationship between them—proved to be emphatically a 'sweet girl,' lovely of face, pure and affectionate, but weak of brain. The mischief did not go beyond weakness.

With friends Louisa showed a spirit, simple always and easily dashed, but almost merry; towards strangers in all likelihood she would never be otherwise than submissive and distrustful of herself to a degree which might well cause a parent anxiety.

Mr. Thomas had married the sister of Sir Philip Staymer, and with certain branches of that family he kept up a close acquaintance. Amy did not learn this fact, as it chanced, until the arrangement was completed. She resolutely proposed to break it off, giving her reasons.

'Bless me!' said Mr. Thomas, 'are you the daughter of that poor fellow? I remember him. Well, well, it's a hard case that Fred Staymer should have half a million, and you—but we can get over the difficulty, my dear, by calling you Miss Dermot henceforward. I'll manage it.'

So Amy changed her name before any of the hostile family had seen her.

In process of time she met several, but Sir Philip did not call, and his son only once. He observed the companion with interest; but if any vague recollections rose in his mind he could not trace them. A fine young soldier he was, as Amy could not but admit. His efforts to divert Louisa failed disastrously, good-natured and amusing as they were, for such quick life and high spirit simply abashed the shy and timid girl. Seeing this, Fred gave her up carelessly, and turned to Miss Dermot, who was not more cordial. Dismissing both the little fools from his mind, he called no more.

So years passed until either girl reached her eighteenth birthday, with no recollection of a bitter word or thought betwixt them. Then Mr. Thomas died suddenly.

Saving a few legacies, he bequeathed all his fortune to Louisa, who was placed under the guardianship of Mr. Anthony Staymer, one of his brothers-in-law. Upon Amy Mr. Thomas settled an annuity of 100*l.* a year, and made a bequest of 5,000*l.*; but these legacies were conditional on her remaining with Louisa until the marriage of the latter. In due time the girls withdrew to Mr. Anthony Staymer's fine dwelling.

It was thought by persons interested that Fred could not ruin himself, though he tried his best, since gambling was no passion with him; and they backed their opinion by lending him money at an exorbitant rate. But circumstances unforeseen upset the calculation.

Both Sir Philip's brothers had withdrawn from the firm, but he still remained at its head in association with three nephews. Creeping age, however, warned him to retire. The partners objected and prayed in vain: Sir Philip went to Shuttleton, and commenced a thorough overhauling of affairs. Three days afterwards his nephews fled.

Things did not prove quite so bad as they would have been, doubtless, had the inquiry been delayed. The great firm was not insolvent, but a very large sacrifice would be necessary—how much was not ascertained when Sir Philip died of shame and self-reproach. Fred left the service, and bent his untrained intelligence to affairs. In process of time it was discovered that the whole sum left by Sir Philip in personal property would not suffice to meet the liabilities of the firm and his son's private debts.

Anthony Staymer advanced what was needful on mortgage of the estate, but it was clear that Fred could not keep up the house on what remained. He wished to sell, to rejoin the army, and make a position for himself.

But his uncle had other views; what they were needs no telling. Fred came to Thetford House for a visit presently.

Louisa was now a beautiful girl, but a look of trouble and anxiety in presence of strangers marred the expression of her perfect face. Though contact with Amy's high spirit had done much to give her an appearance of ease in society, the instinct of self-distrust and obedience remained at least as strong as ever.

Upon these characteristics Anthony relied, if, as was very improbable, she should not fall in love with her brilliant cousin.

Amy also was beautiful, though in quite another style, clear-eyed and resolute, eager, impulsive. I fear that she heard of the Staymer misfortunes in still delight, regarding them as vengeance for the conduct of Sir Philip towards her father. If she forgave the old man now that he was dead, her resentment did not perish with him, for was not Frederick still rich, as she understood, while James Keeley, who made that fortune, had almost starved?

Staymer Hall was advertised 'To Let,' and the young man made his home for a while at Thetford. These shocks had sobered him a little. Amy found herself obliged to confess that he was not the loud, empty-headed rake she had been pleased to fancy, but doubtless he would prove to be just as objectionable in some other way. A few days after his arrival, however, a very small incident disconcerted her.

The three were riding through a lane, in which low posts and rails had been set at intervals beside the path, for some object long forgotten. The flow of talk was dull and laboured. To make a small diversion Amy leapt each barrier and challenged her companions to follow. Louisa rode gracefully, but with no courage, and when she prepared to obey, as usual, her distress was evident. Fred dissuaded her so gravely, with such an anxious demonstration of the peril, that Amy conceived very scornful ideas of his nerve and horsemanship.

A mile or two beyond they met Mrs. Anthony driving home. Louisa complained of fatigue, dismounted, and took a seat beside her aunt.

'Now, Miss Dermot,' Fred exclaimed cheerily, as the others drove on, 'are you game for an old-fashioned steeplechase? But let us wait till poor little Loo can't see.'

They returned across country, flying, and Amy found herself quite out—not in the matter of his riding alone.

She fought hard against a growing conviction that Fred was a chivalrous and gallant fellow. Towards her he showed just the mingling of respect and interest and familiarity which became their respective positions, but with Louisa he made no progress, and Amy was glad to see it. She suspected the projects in view.

Fred perceived in no long time that the more agreeable he made himself the more confused and troubled his cousin grew; though gentle and attentive to her, he fell into a habit of talking with the companion.

It was not easy to keep alive a feeling of distrust and hostility as she came to know him better, but Amy struggled, recalling her

grievances hour by hour. He relieved her on a sudden, going with some friends on a yachting voyage.

In his absence, a cousin of the other branch took lodgings in the neighbourhood, which was convenient for his business in town. The Staymers hardly recognised him, for Mark Thomas was a very unobtrusive young fellow socially and personally, cool, silent, and thoughtful. They allowed him to go to and fro much as he pleased, to escort the girls from church on Sunday, and to call of an evening. Amy had often met him, but his time of greatest intimacy at Clapham had reached an end just at the moment when her own began. Mark went to study the language and commercial affairs at Leipzig before establishing himself in a modest way at home. This cousin was the only male being with whom Louisa could be comfortable. His ways did not daunt her, and his cool self-possession gave a sense of trust.

But Amy had no suspicion how far this soft and timid liking went until Fred's return was announced.

After breakfast on the day which fixed that event, Mrs. Anthony took Louisa to her room, whence the child emerged trembling and pale and tearful.

'Oh, Amy!' she cried, taking refuge in her friend's arms, 'I am to marry Fred! Oh, isn't it dreadful? Oh! I don't know whatever I shall do!' And so on, helpless in her misery.

'If it's dreadful, darling, you shan't be allowed to do it, that's all. What did your aunt say?'

'Oh! she said my mourning was over, and Fred's would be in a short time. And he was coming back on purpose to marry me, and he loves me very much—and—she talked like that! Oh! I'm so wretched!'

'Poor little Louie! Well, did you tell her you wouldn't?'

'Amy!—Then aunt said it was my duty, because Fred is ruined, and I can set the family up again with my money. And she doesn't mean to stand any nonsense, because it's for my good, and I must! Oh, oh!'

'Your manner betrayed you, darling; but it doesn't signify. It's not your duty, and if you don't wish you shall not marry Fred. So that's all about it. Let me think.' The girl waited patiently, sobbing in her arms.

'Can we trust Mr. Thomas?'

'Oh yes, but——'

'But what?'

'I would rather not speak to him, if you don't mind.'

'Of course not. I'll speak, if necessary.'

'But, dear Amy, please, if it doesn't matter, I would rather——'

'Show me your face! You won't? Oh, very well. Then I draw my own conclusions.'

'Oh, there aren't any conclusions to draw!' But Louisa would not emerge from the shelter she had found, crying, with another burst of tears, 'It's no use! I must marry Fred if aunt tells me!'

'There! Take comfort, little one. I'll see about it.'

She requested an interview with Mrs. Anthony, and told her that the match was distasteful. That haughty dame resented the companion's status—immovable until Louisa's marriage—and herself personally. She replied:

'We looked for this, Miss Dermot, and my husband thinks you have every call to protest. That is the natural view for a gentleman to take, but ladies expect more delicacy from one of their own sex.'

'I don't understand, madam.'

'Of course. Well, Miss Dermot, I advise you to make your arrangements, for my niece will certainly be married shortly.'

Then Amy caught the significance of her remarks, and hotly replied: 'Perhaps she will, madam, and for my interest in the matter I hope it will be very shortly indeed.'

Mrs. Anthony did not comprehend now, but she could get no explanation. They parted in hostility avowed. After reflecting and consulting with her husband, the lady made up her mind that Miss Dermot had a wicked scheme for wedding the heiress to some low fellow, probably a connection of her own. Thereupon she kept strict watch over the letters, forbade her servants to admit any visitor to Miss Dermot, and put a stop to outdoor exercise on Louisa's part. Thus absorbed in one idea, she paid no attention to Mark Thomas.

Amy and he came to an understanding very quickly. He heard the news with indignation, confessed his love, and declared himself ready to elope, if needful, at a moment's notice. But this was an abstract proposition. When Amy had brought the cousins together, and Lousia, frightened almost to death, had given a trembling consent, practical questions arose. Mark was not prepared to marry just then. He had sunk all his means available in a speculation, absolutely safe, and sure to give a large return. But for the moment he was penniless.

Some men, Amy thought to herself with scorn, would take a girl they loved just as she stood, would carry her to the registrar's

office, and establish her in their bachelor lodging without an instant's question that she would be happy there—and somehow Fred's image flashed across her mind in thinking of such a man. But young Thomas was methodical, a slave to respectability; by that disposition, indeed, Louisa's confidence had been won, and her love followed. The registrar's office he could accept at a pinch, but the house, the furniture, the decent surroundings of a *bourgeois* marriage, how could they be dispensed with? And Mark had no cash. Moreover, he could think of nobody who would lend, and an accommodation bill was no less than anathema. So matters stood when Fred came home.

Amy knew her charge too well to advise dissimulation. That effort would have raised embarrassment to such a pitch that she might have fallen ill. Things were bad enough already. The aunt gave a vigorous reminder in the morning, with the result that Louisa seemed almost idiotic when they met. Mrs. Anthony declared to Fred that this was her manner of showing delight, and, under the peculiar circumstances, the explanation was not actually absurd. But it could not be accepted long, when from day to day the girl grew paler, and her pretty forehead creased more deeply with lines of bewildered distress. Uncle and aunt urged Fred to propose and have done with it at once: they guaranteed Louisa's joyful consent, and they answered for the rest. Perplexed and pitiful, amused also, he would not take that course.

On the third day, when they chanced to be alone, he asked: 'Are you in my cousin's confidence, Miss Dermot?'

'Perfectly, Captain Staymer.'

'Then you know that our aunt has mentioned to her a certain wish of the family with reference to her marriage?'

'I know.'

'And what does she think?'

'The family cares little what she thinks; but I——'

'Pardon me! Let us drop the family. What were you going to say about yourself?'

'Dropping the family, I say that your conduct is brutal. You know the poor child is weak, that she is mentally unable to resist, that she hates—hates the thought of marrying you—and——'

'Pardon me again! It is unnecessary to go further. I have the information I sought. Now, Miss Dermot, I am not conceited; on the contrary, I always bear in mind that I have still much to learn, and much experience to gather. At the same

time, a man of my age cannot be unaware that girls, in general, are rather pleased than otherwise to be in his company. Hitherto I have never tested their regard to the degree which the family has done towards Louisa—resuming the family just for a moment. I should like to know, if you can tell me, where her objection lies. It is a question purely selfish, but not designed to satisfy mere curiosity. I wish to learn, because the hint may be useful at a future time.'

'I can't tell you, sir. Perhaps Louisa is unreasonable, but dislike is not governed by common-sense.'

'Oh—dislike! I should be very sorry indeed to think that my poor little cousin entertains such a strong feeling.'

'I should not have said that. The word escaped me. I believe that in her heart she likes you very much, only—she does not love you.'

'Thank you. Then we return to the question, Why not?'

Her hasty revolt against an inquiry which seemed to be dictated by conceit—though he denied it—was checked by the real feeling of his protest. Amy had an inspiration.

'Perhaps because she loves somebody else.'

'Ah! that is a comforting explanation! Since you are in Louisa's confidence, I venture to disregard the "perhaps." Will you tell me all about it?'

The inspiration still upheld her. Amy told everything.

'What a dull young prig! However, I know Mark Thomas well enough. He is honest as daylight, and he'll make little Loo happy. I am much obliged to you, Miss Dermot! Leave the rest to me.'

'But, Captain Staymer, you will not betray their secret to your aunt?'

'Not if I know it, by Jove!' he answered, laughing. 'My excellent relatives are so devoted to my interests that they would cut me off with a shilling all round if they knew I was not following the course they recommend. Be quite easy!'

Mark had been away, making a last effort to borrow money without the formality of a bill, against which his superstitions protested. He came back in high satisfaction, and discussed with immediate interest the details of his elopement—for an elopement was obviously necessary. Louisa had still two years to pass under Mr. Anthony's guardianship, and he would never consent to her marriage with a mere Thomas. Amy was very anxious to know where he had found the cash, but amongst this young fellow's virtues the ability to keep a secret was conspicuous.

One morning Louisa did not appear at breakfast, and a letter, singularly coherent, gave the reason. Amy had made up her mind to watch the effect, but at the last moment her courage gave way. She slipped from the room before Mrs. Anthony descended.

That lady's rage and stupor could not be repressed before the servants, and Fred took upon himself to order them away.

'It's a dreadful business, of course,' he said, 'but let us keep it to ourselves. Confound that impudent young counter-jumper! But I suppose there's nothing we can do, uncle? They're married by this time.'

'It's Miss Dermot's doing! She shall leave the house this instant,' cried Mrs. Anthony, pulling the bell-handle with such violence that it broke. 'I'll give her my mind. I'll tell her what she is, the low-born hussy!'

'Please don't be violent with the girl.'

'You take her part, Fred? She's been practising her tricks on you, has she? Thank Heaven, I can see plainly enough, and I'll show her I can speak. Where are those servants?' She tugged at the bell again, and, finding no resistance, snapped the handle off.

'I must tell you, aunt, that Miss Dermot is not the one to blame,' and he frankly avowed his share in the transaction.

Ten minutes afterwards Fred left the house. Mrs. Anthony had spent her wildest rage on him, and when Amy appeared she expressed herself briefly.

'You think you have done a very fine thing, Miss Dermot of course; but we have a consolation—in losing our niece we get rid of you, and the gain is much more important than the loss. It may somewhat damp your satisfaction to learn that my husband has disinherited Captain Staymer, and will foreclose on his remaining property at once. Good day! I expect you to quit this roof before lunch-time.'

She was getting into the cab loaded with her trunks, when Fred returned.

'Oh, Captain Staymer, will you walk a few steps with me?' She told the cabman to follow. 'Can it be true that Mr. Anthony lays the blame on you? Why?'

'Because I lent Thomas the money for furnishing, I suppose.'

'You did? I half suspected it. But how did they know?'

'I told them.'

'Why?—I guess! It was to shield me! How very foolish!

And how generous! But they have disinherited you, and they are going to seize your property? Oh! I am very, very grieved that your kindness should be so requited.'

'Oh! never mind, Miss Dermot. I shall see my reward in Louie's face, I hope, soon.'

'But you are quite ruined now, aren't you?'

'Not quite. I shall be able to rub along. Don't look so distressed. My notion is to volunteer, and, with reasonable luck, I may win a commission before the war is over. That step gained, I have no fear for the result.'

'I must tell you something, Captain Staymer. My name is not Dermot, but Keeley, and I am the little girl you spoke to so kindly eight years ago, when my father lay dying.'

'Bless my soul! That accounts for the vague impression I have sometimes felt in observing you. I hope I am forgiven now, Miss Keeley?'

'Oh, heartily, sir! But you gave that little girl five thousand pounds.'

'So I did; and my father gave her five thousand also.'

'Oh!—then you are twice as rich as I thought. The money is lying untouched. Will you relieve my mind by resuming possession of it now?'

'Not at the price. I refuse to part with the agreeable sense of your approval for ten thousand pounds.'

'Oh! but you are not asked to do that.'

'Still I decline. Something more you must throw into the bargain, Miss Keeley.'

His tone had a significance not to be misunderstood. Amy was silent.

'You don't ask what it is.'

No answer.

'It is yourself, Amy.'

'I am going back to my friends, Captain Staymer. If you like, we will get into the cab now, and when you have made their acquaintance, and thought about it——'

'Then——'

'Then—then—of course—I don't know!'

Five weeks later they were married.

FREDERICK BOYLE.

Of Homely Tragedy.

IT is but a little place this, and I have been trying hard for more than twenty years to know everybody in it. I have sometimes vainly thought that I do in fact know nearly everybody in it; know nearly everybody in it very well. But on any commonplace morning of a working-day, when I try (I often do) to picture out the actual feeling with which these men and women are setting themselves to the task before each, I am made to feel that I know ever so little. There was one, who has been taken away, who used to tell me very frankly of many things he had to think of; and in some imperfect way I think I saw into his heart and his life. But I see others daily, who (if one may reason from oneself to other human beings) must day by day be feeling very anxious, very beaten, yet who meet one with a fairly bright face, and never utter a whisper of their inner experience. A very eminent man, who went many years ago, said in my hearing more than once or twice, *I can't tell you how strange it is to me to meet Smith* (that was not the name). *He has always a cheerful word, and a smile on his face: and yet I know that he is just about broken-hearted, and that he has to bear a burden of care and sordid misery which would soon kill me.* Then the eminent man, talking freely to another not undistinguished, who is gone too, made mention of certain facts as to the actual position and the antecedents of poor Smith: and, shaking sympathetic heads, the two agreed that if placed in Smith's shoes (very worn ones) they would at once lie down and die. Yet Smith, in the fashion named, kept them at arm's length: thus holding his place as a man, thus keeping his self-respect. I remember when a silly and fussy little soul, seeking to force himself into the confidence of a suffering woman (the law reports had made her sufferings patent to mankind), said, *We all feel for you so much, Mrs. Brown* (that was not the name), *in your troubles.* But Mrs. Brown replied, resolutely, *I have no troubles, Mr. Littlebody*; and definitively turned away.

That friend, indicated above (though his name is not given), once said to me, with an anxious face, *There may be hyper-confidence.* He said the words as we met in the morning, having sat up together very late the night before. *Not with some people,* was the answer: *make yourself sure of that.* And the fine face cleared. I will say here (for some will know of whom I am speaking) that everything he ever said to me, speaking sometimes as he could speak to few, went only to make me hold him in the deeper reverence as a truly great man, and in warmer affection as a man lovable beyond the manner of the race.

We are alone, each of us, in our life and our work; as we shall be alone when we go away from both. The nearest approach which can be in this world to a man's life and work being thoroughly known and understood, is in the case (not uncommon, yet not common) of a man's having found the great treasure of a thoroughly-mated wife. She need not be very clever. But affection, and sympathy, give a wonderful intuition of things never told: and it is a great step towards knowing a thing well, to have it continually before you. When a man who has been thus favoured is left a widower, he passes into a spiritual solitude. There is a considerable space (not to say a great gulf) between most men and their nearest friends. Many men have no near friends at all. Many more have only one or two.

All this that has been said one feels profoundly. Not so much through any desolate sense that oneself is little known and very imperfectly understood by those who know one best, or at least who see one most frequently; but by having it borne in upon one how little one knows of the inner life and experience of those known longest, known best. And if we come to know people well, it is not through what they tell us: though they be the most outspoken of mankind. Words do not suffice to express human feeling, with its lights and shadows, its unspeakable variety of conscious experience. We come to know people well through long watching them; specially at times when they have no thought that they are under the microscope. And then we are made to feel how complex is the homeliest character. There are those who think to dash off a human being's nature as by one deeply marked pencil-stroke:—*A conceited creature,* I have heard it said by even a wise (though impatient) man: *A cantankerous fool: A humbug.* Ah, that will not do. Human nature is not so simple as to be truly described thus briefly.

I remember very vividly how the departed friend who has

been steadily in the writer's memory as these lines have been written, told me, more than once or twice (it never was other than most interesting to listen to him, talking upon any subject whatever), how at a certain famous Club whose name and locality need not be indicated, he had occasional glimpses of the solitariness of intellectual exertion never attained elsewhere. Various eminent men, he said, who were members of that Club used there to write the articles in which, through divers renowned periodicals, they conveyed instruction to an attentive world. To simple country souls, whose work must be done in solitude, it is a thing very hard to be understood how any mortal should write anything at a Club beyond a letter to a single friend. But, passing from that, it was related how those distinguished writers would converse in lively tones and with uncontorted countenance with any acquaintance, till the task was taken in hand: but how, in a few minutes after the agony of original composition had been entered on, you would see them writhing about on their chairs, glaring fiercely up at the ceiling or at indefinite space, twisting their expressive faces into horrible frowns. So saying, my friend (who in fact could write as well as any of them) sat down at a little writing-table: convulsively writhed and wildly glared at vacancy: stated that he had repeatedly beheld four or five popular men at the same moment thus twisting and glaring; and that even such was what must be gone through by such as would with success reach mankind through the great London newspapers. He felt deeply (he said) both how hard and how lonely was the exertion of their whole nature which these big-wigs were going through: and he wondered much that they did not each retreat to a solitary room where nobody could see them.

Dark days have been passing over this place. We have been mourning, with true sorrow, the loss of one gone away. We have all made much of the occasion: though not in any way too much. But there is humble, homely tragedy going on close to us, going on continually: and few know of it. Hardly any one cares.

It is a smooth, unlined face now, that I am looking at just for about two minutes: I am left here for that space alone with it, and when the minutes are past, I shall never see it any more. It is the face of a woman of near three-score years and ten. Smooth and unlined now, though I have sometimes seen it look lined and anxious enough, for never was there a harder-working or a more thoughtful creature in this world. The smooth painless face is looking out from the last resting-place which can be provided for

any of us: God be thanked, we have not sunk to that depth of vulgarity and affectation which is implied in calling it a *casket.* I have come to perform the simple service of this nation when the sister who has gone before us is laid in the earth. This is but Friday: and last Sunday she said to a poor neighbour, in her quiet way, *I'll be found dead some day.* Such predictions do not often come true. But the prediction has come true here.

Was it selfish, a little ago, when the writer, speaking of work carried on *to the very end,* thought mainly of such work as his own; or in any case, of the work of better educated people, Masters of Arts, and the like? Here indeed the hard work ceased not to the very end. She went out in the morning to a little room within sight of her door, and took to her work. It was humble work, though hard, and poorly paid. She was seen by divers neighbours running actively about at it. Then for an hour and a half she was left alone; and at the end of that time her old husband went to see how she was getting on. For she was working by herself, as you and I, my brothers who write, are left alone for hours together in the chamber where we bend over the page we are covering, possibly (though we know it not) writhing and glaring and making hideous faces like the more renowned writers in the grand club far away. Then, even as somebody looks in upon us and briefly asks how our work is prospering, the old man looked in. The Sunday prophecy had come true. She was 'found dead': kneeling on the ground with her head resting on a rude little table. She had been taken from the midst of her morning's work: taken quite away from it all. But what she felt, if anything, either of bodily pain or mental perturbation (*Anxius vixi, perturbatus egrediar,* said the old schoolman), no one knows. Only she was gone.

If one had known, the last time one exchanged a word with her, what was coming: one is ready to fancy, though it is pure illusion, that we should have noticed something remarkable in what she said and how she looked. It is not so. There would have been no difference: none at all. Things will not end dramatically, in actual life. They break off in the most unsatisfactory way. After more than twenty years of daily intercourse, I cannot remember at all the last time I talked with Principal Tulloch. For it never entered one's mind that it was the last time. He had been out of sorts, so we thought: he went away for a few weeks' change, of course to come back again perfectly well. So friends slip away.

One thing was plain, and the writer remarked it with entire approval. When the old man, in a very simple and touching fashion, told the story of that day, it never for a moment entered into his head that his wife who had left him was not his wife still. It is much bigger folk, possessed by a sour and hateful religionism, who think it a fine thing to express views which flatly contradict the essential instincts of humanity: things more sacred than any religion, and which have come straighter from the good Power that made us. Sorely warped from the healthful condition of man must that good soul have been who, lying on his bed in the last hour, the poor partner of many anxious years ministering to him, said in a solemn voice, *Lord have mercy on this gentlewoman who was once my wife*; and then put her hand away. Sharp was the pang which the sour puritan sent to that faithful heart. But then the very basis of his religious belief for many years had been, that the uglier, more disagreeable and more unnatural anything was, the likelier it was to be the right thing. And the god in whom he believed was a small-minded, touchy being, always on the watch for a slight, and shabbily jealous to see human creatures care for any one but himself. It is a terrible thing to say of any professed Christian that the god he has been taught to set up is not the God you worship at all. But surely moral qualities which are mean and devilish make a deity quite as far from the truth as any hideous Hindoo idol, physically revolting, can be. That decent dying man, who (let us hope) did not know the meaning of what he said, would doubtless have looked down as from a huge elevation upon Charles Kingsley vehemently saying that unions like his own were for eternity: upon the dear woman who said to Stanley, in parting, *Think of me as in the next room*: and would not have been touched in the very least by the story Carlyle tells of the German king, holding the hand of his dying wife, who when the faint breath had ceased, and those around thought she was gone, felt the chilling hand give three slight, slight pressures; which did not mean farewell.

He was too simple-minded, that old friend of mine, to vex himself with perplexities as to where his wife had gone. She was *at rest*; she was where things are *far better*. That was quite enough; his faith was simple, was firm. Just yesterday a good woman, fading away through unutterable weariness day and night, but now nearing the change, said to me as I left her, *Rest will be sweet*. And I suppose it is rest which is uppermost in many minds, as it was with the weary Nathaniel Hawthorne. But the

look-out is very vague. One sometimes wonders that good people are content to have it so vague. I knew a little boy, long ago, who had done some very small wrong-doing; and then was possessed by the feeling that things could never be right again. All that remained for him was to run away. Accordingly he proposed to a little brother, a few years older, that they should run away together. The elder brother was so much amused by the suggestion, that he pretended to assent to it, to see what the little desperado would do. Finally, each having taken a large piece of bread, they started on a dark winter night. After going a hundred yards, the elder suggested to the younger that probably there was no need for fleeing from their home; and they came back to find the desperate trouble could be most simply set right. For in that house punishment was unknown. The heads of it did not scruple to say that they esteemed Solomon as a very silly person in the matter of education. And the result, so far, has been incomparably more satisfactory than was the result of Solomon's free use of 'the rod.' His son proved the very greatest fool in history. But when the wanderers returned, it was asked, with much interest, of the small wrong-doer, what he intended to do when he had fled from his home. *Oh, just beg about*, was the ready reply. I have often thought that even so vague is the outlook of most of us, thinking of a future life. The little man did not in any way realise what it would be when the dinner-hour came: still less what it would be when the winter-night settled down, with its awful cold and darkness. And we are all extremely like him. Which is very strange.

Then comes the question, How will they do without you? I think it very likely that when this good old woman felt that something had laid hold of her which was quite different from anything known before, her main thought would be, Who would take care of the poor old man? He was all she had to think of. *I could not have lain down at a worse time*, were the words of the most faithful of servants and friends, when the trouble came which laid her aside, and in a very few days took her away. An infinity of things which ought to be done pressed upon the faithful heart. But the poor mother, the working man's wife, who did everything for her children: I know no more touching tragedy than that which I see too often, when she has to go. All the details of their little stock of raiment: their daily food: their school-books, their getting ready for school, their being sent punctually: their little illnesses: their little faults which need correcting (not punishing):

and how, in anxious marketing, to make the hard-earned wages go farthest: these are the things which crowd in, which weigh very heavily. I confess, quite frankly, and I am not in the least ashamed of it, that when I have had to look on a poor sharp face, on a poor dying creature rent by such cares; I felt at least a thousand times as much as I should feel for a Prime Minister disappointed of his majority, or for an Emperor (or the like) deservedly kicked out by the nation he demoralised. As for the dethroned monarch, I have no doubt I care for him exactly as much as he ever cared for any one but himself: the precise amount need not be specified. But I have found that which was like to break one's heart in the concerns of my poor parishioners. I have found a pathos far beyond Æschylus or Sophocles in the homeliest of Homely Tragedy.

A. K. H. B.

Marrying and Giving in Marriage.

By Mrs. Molesworth,

Author of 'Hathercourt Rectory,' 'Carrots,' &c.

CHAPTER I.

It is but seldom in life that events—unexpected or little looked-for events more especially perhaps—bring with them cause for either unmixed rejoicing or unmitigated regret. I doubt if news often illumines a human countenance with less qualified pleasure than shone in the face of Lady Christina Verney the day that her husband announced to her his reluctant acceptance of a certain mission, diplomatic or financial, perhaps both—its precise nature may be left indefinite—which would oblige himself and his family to take up their abode in Paris for a period of several months.

Life, it is but fair to Lady Christina to premise, had not been all a path of rose-leaves to her. Her lines had lain over some rough ground, and the pleasant places had been tardy in making their appearance. And it is open to question if overmuch scrambling or picking one's way should be looked upon as of the nature of salutary and wholesome discipline. The skin may harden and toughen till the delicacy of perception and touch suffers irretrievably: some mire too is apt to stick.

And above all are these disastrous results to be apprehended when the outset of life—childhood or youth—is subjected to ungenial conditions. This had been pre-eminently the case with Lady Christina Verney.

'So you are pleased?' said Mr. Verney, rubbing his chin undecidedly and staring into the fire.

'Pleased? I should think so. It is the very thing of all others I should have wished. It will bring you forward, Owen; there is no saying what it may not lead to. And—long ago I knew Paris so well—I shall be delighted to be there again, and above all to take Aveline.'

'You will miss the season here,' remarked Mr. Verney. He was far from a stupid man, but his wife puzzled him sometimes, well as he knew her, and he glanced up at her from under his shaggy fair eyebrows with a somewhat dubious expression.

Lady Christina smiled in a superior way.

'The season, my dear Owen,' she repeated. 'You surely do not think so poorly of me as to imagine me one of those worldly-minded women who would complain of missing the season when it is so clearly at the call of duty. Besides, we may make some pleasant acquaintances in Paris. My old friend Madame de Boncœur will be delighted to introduce us; she's in a very good set I believe. It will do Aveline no harm to see a little French society, though I should not wish her to form intimacies exactly. They look at things so differently from us; in some ways there is so little sentiment about them. They are so practical, so worldly.'

'Humph,' said Mr. Verney, 'the French *have* a trick of calling spades spades now and then.'

But he did not speak impressively, and his wife scarcely heard what he said.

'There *is* a coarseness about the French notwithstanding their surface refinement,' she agreed—she would have agreed with anything Mr. Verney chose to say that morning. 'No, I shall discourage any intimacies certainly. But there may be some of our own English friends there,' she went on with an almost imperceptible change of tone, which did not, however, escape Mr. Verney. 'The embassy people of course we shall know, and my cousins, the Roslands, will be staying a while on their way back from Cannes, and—oh yes, by the bye, I heard from Lady Ayrton the other day that Sir Francis will not be able to return home for three months at least, and they hope to be joined by their son almost immediately. Poor Sir Francis, he has had a sad time of it. I shall be glad to cheer her a little, poor thing.'

Mr. Verney did not answer. He was still staring into the fire, still rubbing his chin.

'I wonder what Christina has got in her head,' he was saying to himself; but outwardly he made no sign.

'It will cost us a lot of money,' he said at last, rousing himself; 'I was talking about it to Bart this afternoon.'

'Then if that is all Bart has to say on the subject he had better keep his remarks to himself,' said Lady Christina, with a slight touch of asperity.

'Come now, Christina, you're not fair on him. *He* didn't suggest the idea, he only agreed with me when I said so. On the contrary, poor fellow'—but here Mr. Verney broke off, quickly resuming again—'he was saying we might let this house.'

'Of course we can let this house,' said Lady Christina; 'I do not need your brother to remind me of that.'

This time the asperity was quite unconcealed. Mr. Verney wished he had refrained from quotations.

He rose from his seat—a process which took some little time, for he was very tall and very spare, and his movements were deliberate—stretched himself as he stood on the hearth-rug, and seemed about to make up his mind to leave the room, when the door opened and a girl came in.

'Papa,' she exclaimed, 'I didn't know you had come home. Are you busy?' she went on, glancing from tall, irresolute-looking papa on the hearth-rug to mamma, bright-eyed and energetic, already re-established at her writing-table with a pile of notes and letters, of neatly docketed bills and tradesmen's books, before her—how many thousand times in her life had not Aveline Verney seen her thus?—'Are you talking? Shall I not stay?'

'We have finished talking,' said her father.

Lady Christina said nothing. Five minutes before she had been in brilliant spirits, but somehow the mention of her brother-in-law had rubbed the bloom off her first pleasure. Still the solid satisfaction was there, and it carried the day.

'No,' she said, after a minute's silence, during which Aveline stood there uncertain, with an indefinite and not unpleasant feeling of expectancy. She was going to hear something; she scented it in the air. What could it be?—nothing bad surely. Papa and mamma did not seem annoyed. 'No,' said Lady Christina, 'you need not go away. Owen, you had better tell her; she is no longer a child. At one-and-twenty,' with this time the very slightest shadowy hint of reproach in her voice; 'at one-and-twenty many a girl is at the head of a house. Tell her, Owen.'

Then Aveline turned her inquiring grey eyes to her father. She was tall like him—tall and fair, but not spare, scarcely indeed to be called slight, but yet with a girlish litheness about her which accorded with the underlying appeal in eyes on the surface calm if not cold.

Mr. Verney unfolded his long length yet a little further, but slowly, as he prepared to speak.

'I had a letter from Paris this morning, Avé,' he began.

Then something caught his attention about the lower buttons of his waistcoat or his watch-chain; he frowned down at the misbehaving object and began disentangling it as if all else were unimportant. It was a peculiarity of Mr. Verney's to stop short at the end of the first sentence whenever he had anything of interest to announce. Aveline knew this so well that her eagerness increased.

'From Paris,' she murmured, under her breath, and a faint colour rose to her face. But aloud she said only one word—

'Papa!'

It pulled him together again, and the appeal, uppermost now in the girl's eyes, kept him to the point.

'Yes, from Paris,' he repeated emphatically, as if Aveline had questioned his statement. 'I don't know if your mother told you that there was an idea, some time ago, of my undertaking a sort of—oh, you couldn't quite understand without a long explanation—a sort of mission there in connection with my department here. It will be a private arrangement—not coming much before the public. I thought it unlikely to go through, but to-day I have received the definite offer of it, and I have accepted it. Your mother is pleased at it—and so are you—eh?'

For the girl's face expressed unmistakable delight.

'Of course I am pleased, papa,' she was beginning, but her mother interrupted.

'I don't think that is the question, Owen,' she said. 'Aveline has, I *think*, been too well brought up to put her own personal likes or dislikes in the first place, when it is a matter of consequence for the whole family.'

'I didn't mean,' began Aveline, timidly, glancing at her father, but he said nothing. 'We shall *all* go to Paris, I suppose?' she asked, this time speaking to her mother.

Lady Christina turned to her husband.

'What are you thinking about the little ones?' she said. 'Of course Chris and Arthur will stay at school, but Leonora and the nursery children——?'

'They must all come,' said Mr. Verney, more decidedly than he had yet spoken. 'At least I won't go without them.'

Then Aveline's face, which had expressed suspense, grew completely sunny again.

'I don't know what I should have done without Leo,' she said, but too low for her mother to hear.

Mr. Verney was dining at his club that day. Lady Christina

and her daughter were alone at table, and in such circumstances the dinner was of the simplest, for Lady Christina had not served her long apprenticeship to high class poverty in vain.

Mother and daughter spoke little, but Aveline was not uneasy. She saw that Lady Christina was silent from preoccupation of mind only, and that, apparently, not of a disagreeable nature. There was no sensation of weight in the atmosphere, as of a storm brewing, such as the girl had learnt to descry the premonitory symptoms of, and to dread.

'Poor mamma,' she said to herself; 'no doubt she is counting over how many pairs of sheets, and pillow-cases, and table-cloths, and tea-spoons, will have to be packed up to take with us. I wish I cared more about things like that; if I did, perhaps we should get on better. I think I could fancy myself caring if—if I had a little house of my own, and somebody who thought I did things nicely, and——'

A moment later her mother looked up sharply, and glanced across the table. Aveline felt herself blush.

'What are you thinking of, my dear?' asked Lady Christina.

'A mixture of things, mamma,' Aveline replied truthfully. 'Just at the very instant you spoke, I was thinking that Mademoiselle has so often said that French pillows are a different shape from ours—she used to grumble at ours—and I was wondering if our pillow-cases would do.'

Lady Christina still looked at her daughter.

'Was that really the only thing you were thinking about?' she said.

'Mamma!' exclaimed Aveline, 'do I ever tell what isn't true? I didn't say it was the only thing I was thinking of—I said it was what I was thinking of at the instant you spoke.'

'You are the very queerest mixture of a woman and a baby of any girl I have ever known,' said her mother. But her tone was not unamiable.

Aveline smiled a little.

'Wasn't my remark a practical one?' she said. 'Seriously, dear mamma, I do wish to be practical, and to help you more. You are always thinking and working for us. Wouldn't it be a good time for me to begin taking more charge of things just now when we are going away?'

'No, my dear. It will be time enough when you have a house of your own to take charge of,' said her mother. And Aveline said no more, though she sighed a little.

Lady Christina rose from table.

'I must go,' she said. 'I have several letters to write to-night. You needn't cut that tart, Aveline, it will come in so well cold for luncheon to-morrow. If you haven't had enough to eat you can have something later with tea. I shall want a cup of tea, for I shall be writing till late.'

'I've had quite enough, thank you, mamma,' said Aveline, getting up in her turn. 'If you don't want me I'm going to Leo in the schoolroom, and to say good night to the little ones.'

So she went off to the nursery, while Lady Christina betook herself to her letters.

But Aveline did not stay long with the younger children. She was eager to get to the schoolroom, where her sister Leonora was still busy at work preparing to-morrow's lessons.

'I've nearly finished, Aveline,' she exclaimed, as the elder girl came in. 'Wait two minutes only, and then we can talk. Papa is out, I know.'

'And mamma is busy. She doesn't want me,' said Aveline. 'I told her I was coming to you.'

'And we can talk comfortably,' said Leo; 'I am so glad. I have such lots to say.'

'Finish your lessons first,' said Aveline.

She seated herself on the least uncomfortable of the schoolroom chairs, and drawing it towards the fire sat gazing into it, like her father. She was very like him as she sat thus, and Leo, darker and more energetic, hurrying to get her work done, peering with bent brows into dictionaries and grammars, reminded one forcibly of Lady Christina engrossed by her accounts. Yet in spite of difference of feature and complexion, that much discussed outward expression of affinity, that commonly called 'family' likeness, was strong and unmistakable between the sisters.

'There!' exclaimed Leonora, collecting her books and papers, and piling them neatly together as she spoke; 'there, now I've done. Mamma will be more particular than ever about my French now that we are going to Paris. I do so want to hear all about it, Aveline. Papa only told me a very little—he said I might ask you. Are we going soon? Aren't you awfully pleased, Avé? Avé, shan't we see Mr. Hereward there?'

'Yes, I suppose so,' said Aveline, somewhat impatiently. 'You run on so quick, Leo, you confuse me. I wish you would talk of one thing at a time. We shall see lots of people, no doubt; I wish you were a year, or a year and a half, older—if you

were seventeen, perhaps mamma would let you go out a little. It would be so nice. I should like it so much more if I had you to think about, and to talk it all over with afterwards.'

'We do the "talking over afterwards" pretty well as things are,' said Leo. 'And it is no use dreaming of my coming out till you are married, Avé. Mamma would not hear of it. So I hope you will take pity on me before long.'

Aveline sat silent for a few moments. Then she said rather abruptly:

'I know mamma would like me to be married. I sometimes wish it could be all settled, and that I could just be told I must do it—that it would be right. I don't know that I'd mind much.'

'Wouldn't you just?' said Leonora, with schoolboy emphasis, which she had caught from her brothers. 'When it came to the point, and you found out you didn't like the man——'

'No,' persisted Aveline, speaking more eagerly than her wont. 'I don't think I should mind. It would be a satisfaction to think one was pleasing one's family, and——'

'Suppose it was a really horrid man?' Leo interrupted.

'No good parents would want their daughter to marry a horrid man?' said Aveline.

'But if you couldn't like him?'

'If one was quite sure one couldn't marry anybody one *did* like or might have liked,' said Aveline, vaguely, 'I don't know that one would much mind.'

Leonora looked at her reproachfully.

'When you talk that way you're not at all like a heroine—and I like you to be a heroine,' she said.

'I never could be one,' said Aveline, smiling. 'But sometimes I think I should be glad to please mamma at almost any cost,' and the girl sighed a little.

Leonora hesitated before she spoke again, and when she did it was almost in a whisper.

'Aveline,' she said, 'when you speak of knowing you can't possibly marry any one you like, are you—don't be vexed with me—are you thinking of Mr. Hereward?'

'Oh, Leo!' said Aveline; 'you *are* rather tiresome. Why do you keep on always about Mr. Hereward? I'm sure I have told you about plenty of other men I have met.'

'Yes,' said Leo, composedly; 'you have certainly. But many of them I never saw, and those I did see never took any notice of me. But he always did—he was so nice when he came to call on

Sundays if ever I was in the drawing-room. Don't you remember, Aveline?'

'I've been trying to forget about him,' the elder sister answered, naïvely. 'I daresay I should almost forget him in a while if I never saw him again. I think I shall be sorry if he is still in Paris when we go, for if he is I can hardly help seeing a good deal of him. Mamma likes him, and she is sure to ask him. He would be useful to her, I daresay.'

'Yes,' said Leonora. Then she, too, sat silent for a few moments. 'I don't think I want to be grown-up, and come out, and all that,' she remarked gravely, at last. 'Life is very difficult for girls, I think.'

'Well, perhaps then you can understand a little what I mean about French girls,' said Aveline. 'Life cannot be so difficult for *them*.'

'I'd like to know how they feel about it,' said Leo. 'Do you think we shall get to know any, *well*, Aveline?'

Aveline shook her head.

'I don't in the least know how mamma intends to do,' she replied. 'She has some old friends in Paris, but I don't know if we shall know much of them.'

Leonora was by this time ensconced on the hearth-rug, her head leaning on her sister's knee.

'What are you thinking about?' said Aveline.

The child—for she was scarcely more—sat up and looked at her sister.

'I don't quite know,' she said, shaking her dark curly hair out of her eyes, and smiling a little. 'I think I was thinking what things I'd wish for if a fairy gave me some wishes.'

'It's no use thinking of such things,' said Aveline. 'There are no fairies and no wishes, and not much good luck. Still there are some nice things sometimes. I'm glad we're going to Paris—at first I was exceedingly glad, and then when I began thinking about it I was not sure about it. But on the whole I think I am. I am so thankful we are all going, Leo. It would have been dreadful if you had been left behind.'

'But mamma never thought of that, did she?' said Leo, looking startled.

'*Papa* didn't,' said Aveline. 'He said he wouldn't go without you and the three little ones. And mamma is so anxious to go that she won't make any difficulties about anything.'

'Is she so pleased about it?' said Leo.

'Very. I can see that she is. I wonder why—it will give her a great deal of trouble, and we shall miss the season here,' said Aveline. 'I suppose she will like to see some of her old friends again—she always says she was very happy in Paris when she was a girl. I think we'd better go to her now, Leo; she must have finished her letters I should think,' and Aveline got up as she spoke.

'I'm going to bed,' said Leo; 'I'm not dressed, and I'm sleepy. Good-night, Avé—if mamma asks for me, tell her I was doing my lessons till late and so I thought I'd better go to bed.'

Lady Christina was still writing when Aveline went into the drawing-room.

'Is that you, Aveline?' she said, with a slight touch of impatience. 'I haven't finished my letters yet. Get a book, and don't speak to me just yet.'

'I wonder what mamma has so much to write about. I wish she would let me help her,' thought the girl to herself. But she sat down quietly, and either read or pretended to do so, till at last Lady Christina rose, with a sigh half of relief half of weariness, with two or three letters ready for posting in her hands.

'Ring, Aveline,' she said; 'I will send these to-night,' she added, half speaking to herself, 'even though it is late. They may catch an early mail,' and when the servant came into the room she told him to post them at once.

'Will you have a great deal to do about our going to Paris, mamma?' asked Aveline.

'Naturally,' said her mother, 'a family like ours can't be moved without a good deal of trouble. But as it is so clearly for —for your father's good, we must not mind the trouble.'

'Shall we know many people there?' asked Aveline. 'Shall we go out a good deal?'

hardly know,' said her mother. 'Of course we must go out, though probably not as much as here. But I should like you to see something of French society, though I should not care for you to see *much* of it. And there will probably be some of our English friends there—the Roslands and the Ayrtons certainly.'

'Oh, mamma, not that horrid Wilfred Ayrton; it will quite spoil Paris if he is there.'

'Aveline, I am ashamed of you,' said Lady Christina; 'you are really past the age for talking so childishly. You know very well that I am exceedingly fond of the Ayrtons. They have been very steady and kind friends to me for many years, and it isn't

right to dislike a man just because he is—well, perhaps a little slow and heavy, and not particularly good-looking.'

'It isn't for that I dislike him, mamma. He is so very selfish and—and coarse somehow. It isn't only that he is stupid.'

'How often have you seen him to enable you to form such a matured opinion of him, may I ask?' said Lady Christina, icily.

'Oh, mamma, don't be vexed with me. I've only seen him two or three times, I know. But what does it matter? I do think Lady Ayrton 's very nice and kind, and I'll like *her* as much as you wish. And it is she that is your old friend, not that—not her son—so you needn't be vexed with me,' and Aveline leant over her mother to kiss her.

The kiss was not repelled; caresses were somewhat rare in the Verney family—perhaps Lady Christina appreciated Aveline's kiss more than she would have thought it wise to allow, perhaps she had her own reasons for not wishing to rouse discussion or disagreement on the subject of Mr. Wilfred Ayrton. Be that as it may, she permitted, if she did not return, her daughter's kiss; and there was even an approach to a smile on her face as she replied:

'I am not vexed with ycu, my dear. I am very tired, and I have a great many things on my mind. I suppose it is impossible for a girl of your age quite to enter into all I have to think about. But don't get into the habit of taking up foolish prejudices, whatever you do, Aveline. There is nothing more fatal to a girl's success in life.'

'One can't help knowing whom one likes and dislikes, mamma,' objected Aveline.

'Yes; but in many cases it is right to keep one's mind and judgment in abeyance, as it were, and still more, to have *some* respect for the judgment of others—of one's parents for instance. And where your opinion of any one in particular has not been asked——'

'You don't see that I need give it,' said Aveline, laughing. 'Very well, mamma, I won't obtrude my likes and dislikes, and I'll try not to be prejudiced. Now isn't that good of me? What could I say more?'

The fair smiling face was irresistible. Lady Christina herself was the one to volunteer a kiss this time.

'Good-night, my dear,' she said; and as Aveline left the room, 'I'm sure I only wish for her good,' she added to herself.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN one is still very glad of good fires in London—when it is indeed still so cold that it is difficult to imagine the time will ever return when a good fire will be no longer the best thing in life—there are nevertheless, as everybody believes and as many people know for themselves, places where already it is almost overpoweringly hot. Pau is one of those places. All of a sudden some spring morning, the sun bursts out with extraordinary vigour; the short season of sharp biting cold seems like a dream, and one has to look at the dates of the newspapers or of one's letters to make sure that it is only March or April and not August.

On such a day, about four in the afternoon, one of the letters, —the principal one indeed—that Lady Christina Verney had written on the evening after her husband's acceptance of the Paris appointment, reached its destination. This was the sitting-room of a handsome suite on the first floor of the Hôtel Beau Soleil. The person to whom the letter was addressed was standing near the window, beside which an invalid couch was drawn up. A gentleman, elderly if not old, lay on the couch. At the moment the servant came into the room he was speaking in a rather querulous tone to the lady beside him.

'Away for the day, you think? It is very inconsiderate of him. *I* never see him. I might just as well have no son. But it must be your fault, Sophia—you have not the knack of attracting him to stay at home as other mothers manage to do. It is very hard upon me—this wretched health and everything—Wilfred first of all—going to the dogs.'

Lady Ayrton moved to her husband with some words of apology or deprecation on her gentle, faded face.

'I'm sure I'm as sorry about it as you can be, Francis. I would do anything to'——

But the welcome words, 'A letter, my lady,' interrupted her.

'A letter from Christina Verney. I am glad of that,' she exclaimed. 'I hope there will be something to amuse you in it,' and she sat down as she spoke and began to open it.

'To amuse me,' grumbled Sir Francis; 'not very likely. This outrageous heat, joined to all my other discomforts, is enough to send me out of my mind or into my grave at once.'

But all the same he watched his wife's face with interest as she read quickly down the first page of the letter and eagerly turned it without speaking.

'Well—what is it? What are you smiling about like a—what *is* there in the letter? Can't you speak, Sophia?'

'Oh, I beg your pardon!' she exclaimed. 'I quite forgot you were waiting. I am so very pleased, Francis. The Verneys will be in Paris when we get there. Mr. Verney has to be there for some months, as Christina spoke of some time ago, and they are all going over.'

'Is that all there is in the letter? I don't see that it matters much to us—I like Verney well enough, but I don't particularly care about him. I really thought there was some pleasant news for once,' growled Sir Francis.

'It isn't *un*pleasant,' said poor Lady Ayrton; 'you have often said you liked both Christina and her daughter. The pretty, fair girl, you remember?'

'Yes—she's not a bad sort of girl. Quiet and nice-mannered, not one of those dreadfully noisy creatures you see so many of nowadays. If we had had a daughter like that now—but no doubt if we had had a daughter we should have had no more satisfaction out of her than we have out of that precious son of yours,' said Sir Francis, waxing bitter over the imaginary daughter's deficiencies.

'Wilfred may marry,' began Lady Ayrton, 'some one whom you would really like, and——'

'I pity his wife,' said Sir Francis. 'I may be a selfish valetudinarian myself—I'm not going to defend myself—but upon my soul, Sophia, my wife is not to be pitied in comparison with Wilfred's, should she ever come to exist. At his age I had some generosity, some chivalry, some ambition—but Wilfred——' and the invalid gave a gesture of disgust.

Lady Ayrton looked distressed.

'I think you are hard upon him,' she said timidly. 'All young men——'

'Don't talk twaddle, Sophia,' interrupted Sir Francis, testily. 'You know in your heart that what I say is true. You've got some scheme in your head, I suppose—some plan for marrying your precious son and reforming him——'

'My dear Sir Francis, I do beg you not to use such strong expressions,' said Lady Ayrton, more resolutely than she had yet spoken. 'Any one overhearing you would think Wilfred was a perfect reprobate.'

'And they wouldn't be far wrong,' said her husband. 'Nevertheless, I'm not publishing my opinion to the world. There is no

one to overhear what I say. And I have no wish to interfere with your plans—if you can get him married to any decent girl, I am sure I shall have no objection. It would be a great relief not to have him always loafing about us.'

'And not five minutes ago you were complaining that he never comes near you,' said Lady Ayrton, with some spirit. 'Really, Sir Francis——.'

'Tut, tut, my dear, I'm not going to defend myself. Drop the subject, for Heaven's sake; we always quarrel when we talk about Wilfred—and no wonder. There is certainly nothing very agreeable to be said about him.'

The subject in question was not fated to be so easily dropped; for at that moment Mr. Wilfred Ayrton in person entered the room.

'Good morning, sir. How're you getting on to-day?' And then without waiting for an answer, 'It's confoundedly hot—can't we get away from this beastly hole, mother? There's not a breath of air in the place.'

Sir Francis looked at him without speaking; then he turned to his wife.

'Will you be so good as to give me my book?' he said to her coldly but civilly. It was one of his peculiarities always to speak civilly to his wife in his son's presence.

Lady Ayrton handed him the book; then got up and crossed the room to the further window—the letter which had drawn forth the discussion with her husband still in her hand. Mr. Ayrton followed her.

'What's the matter with him, to-day?' he said in a whisper, though not so low but that, had he been particularly anxious to do so, Sir Francis might have heard his words. 'Not much inducement for a fellow to try to please a surly old——'

'Wilfred,' said his mother, with a warning glance.

'Well, I want to talk to you, mother. Will you come out? The band's playing, and those girls that arrived last night are sure to be at it. I want to see them—I rather fancy they're good fun. I only came in because you're always bullying me about being civil to the guv'nor, and I didn't exactly want to get further into his black books at present.'

Lady Ayrton sighed.

'Is it about money again, Wilfred?' she asked.

'I don't see what else it's likely to be about,' was the gruff reply. 'I'm not going to stand this doling out money to me when I know that there's plenty. I'm five-and-twenty—it must all

come to me sooner or later, and it's downright absurd that I should be kept as short as a schoolboy.'

Lady Ayrton did not answer. She glanced at Sir Francis—he seemed to be falling asleep.

'We can talk better outside,' she said. 'I will go with you to the band. Wait for me at the door of the hotel. Your father is asleep, I think.'

Five minutes later the mother and son were on their way to the 'Place,' where at a certain time of the day in fine weather many of the visitors assemble. Mr. Ayrton had not apparently recovered his good temper. His face, at the best of times heavy and stolid in expression, looked sulky and forbidding, his short thick-set figure was not rendered more graceful by a certain lifting of the shoulders peculiar to him when displeased; Lady Ayrton, whose proportions were far from sylph-like, whose fat fair face could scarcely be called interesting, seemed attractive and agreeable in the extreme when compared with her unlovely son. She had in her time been a pretty girl, a more genial and active life might have left her still a pretty woman; Sir Francis on his side had been remarkably handsome, and intellectually speaking a man of parts; why Wilfred should be what he was, was a problem over which his father sneered in his cynical moods, and groaned at those times when physical suffering left not even strength to be cynical.

The pair walked on for some little way in silence. Suddenly Mr. Ayrton gave an exclamation.

'There they are! Look, mother—those people on the other side. The one in that green and gold dress is the best-looking, and the jolliest too, I fancy,'

Lady Ayrton raised her eyeglass and looked languidly across the street.

'Americans I should say,' she replied; 'I never can admire Americans, Wilfred. They may be handsome, but they are such very bad style.'

Wilfred's face grew sulky again.

'Sure not to admire anything that takes my fancy,' he muttered. Aloud he said, 'What sort of girl *do* you admire? There's not a decent-looking one here that I've seen.'

'No,' agreed his mother, 'I haven't seen many this year. Perhaps we shall be more fortunate in Paris, Wilfred. I hope to meet some old friends there. I have had letters to-day.'

Wilfred did not seem particularly interested.

'If it's anything to hasten our leaving this place I shall thank my stars,' he said. 'I couldn't have stood it till now if I hadn't been hard up.'

'How are you hard up?' asked his mother. 'Your allowance is a magnificent one, Wilfred—for a man alone I don't see that you could wish for more.'

Mr. Ayrton grunted. The best part of him came out when he got his long-suffering mother to himself. At least he was sure of being listened to and not sneered at with a caustic bitterness which he felt though he scarcely understood the keenness of its edge.

'I daresay you're right,' he said, speaking, for him, gently. 'But I do wish for more all the same. I've no one to care what I do or how I live when I'm not with you, and I can't stand my father for long. And so I get into all sorts of things—things it's no use telling you about—and then my money goes. I wish you'd made a soldier of me, or a sailor, or a backwoodsman, mother. I'd maybe have been good for something.'

'You might have been in the army—your father had no objection—if you would have worked,' said his mother, regretfully. 'The diplomatic service was what we *wished*, you know.'

'Oh, that's rot,' said Mr. Ayrton; 'I never could have stood the work, even if I could have got into it. What's the good of being rich if one's to grind away like that?'

'I was only taking up your own words—about wishing you were good for something,' said Lady Ayrton.

'But the point to attend to at the present moment is about my getting the money I want,' said Wilfred.

'The getting it for you will fall upon me as usual, I suppose,' replied his mother, 'and I am by no means sure that I shall succeed. Your father is growing tired of it, Wilfred; and so am I. Things cannot go on like this. We must come to some sort of understanding.'

'I don't know what you mean,' said Mr. Ayrton, sulkily. 'It must be all mine some day. Other fellows would have got all they wanted long ago, considering that—that's one thing I *haven't* done, but there's no saying what I mayn't be driven to.'

'Driven to ruin yourself, you mean, Wilfred,' said his mother. 'It is no use talking to you about breaking my heart and your father's, but you cannot be completely indifferent about your own future.'

'Pon my soul, I don't know but what I am,' replied he, kicking some pebbles with his foot as he spoke.

Lady Ayrton took no notice of this ejaculation. They had reached the 'Place' by this time, but they were still at some little distance from the more crowded part where the band was playing. An empty bench under some trees was near them.

'Let us wait here a moment or two,' she said, sitting down. 'There is something I want to say to you. You can surely give me your attention for five minutes—you can find out the American beauties afterwards,' she went on bitterly, for though Mr. Ayrton had sat down beside her, she saw that his eyes were roving here, there, and everywhere, in search, doubtless, of the green-and-gold costume.

'I'm quite willing to give my attention,' he replied, arranging his silver-mounted walking-stick so as to be able comfortably to suck the great knob at the top between times as a little refreshment.

Lady Ayrton sat silent for a moment looking before her. The beautiful sunlight glimmered through the trees overhead, their leaves casting strange fantastic networks of shadow on the hot gravel beneath. The clear voices of some birds twittered cheerily close at hand, while the music of the band sounded pleasantly soft in the distance. A pretty, bright-eyed girl of seventeen or so, passing at this moment with her mother, glanced at the two on the bench, and a slight expression of surprise crossed her face.

'How can people look so gloomy when everything is *so* delicious?' Lady Ayrton heard her say.

The poor lady sighed, but the remark had aroused her.

'Wilfred,' she began. Mr. Ayrton left off sucking his cane for a moment, and gave a slight nod to indicate that he was not asleep.

'Fire away,' he said lazily.

'Wilfred,' she went on, 'what should you think of marrying?'

Mr. Ayrton started slightly—started and then frowned. 'Awkward rather,' he muttered to himself, but his mother did not hear the words.

'Don't see the use of it,' he said aloud.

'It would please your father, it would please *me*,' she continued, her voice trembling a very little with the last words. 'It might be the beginning of a new life for you. Your father would pay your debts again, I feel sure, if you married to his satisfaction, and you might start clear on an income more than sufficient for every comfort and luxury you could wish. And, you say you have no one to care for you, Wilfred, can you not imagine yourself caring for and being cared for by a good and sweet girl?'

Mothers are proverbially partial; Lady Ayrton had cherished

her maternal illusions with exaggerated solicitude, even while refusing to own to herself the frailty of their origin, but yet, as the words 'a good and sweet girl' crossed her lips, she hesitated and faltered. Mr. Ayrton was not looking his best at that moment. His face had darkened again, his shoulders were up above his ears —he was not an attractive object, to put it very mildly. His sullen-looking mouth was firmly shut, and he gave no signs of intending to open it.

'Wilfred,' said his mother, after a little pause.

'What is it?' he said without moving.

'You might answer me.'

'I've nothing to say. I don't want to marry, I only want to get the money I need, and to be allowed to do as I choose.'

'Well, then,' said his mother, suddenly rising to her feet and speaking with a strength and decision quite new to her in her son's experience, 'I wash my hands of you. I shall not ask nor advise your father either to increase your income or to pay your debts. I am tired out by you, Wilfred—I can do no more.'

But even while she spoke her voice broke a little—tears were not far off. Mr. Ayrton seized his advantage.

'Don't excite yourself so, mother,' he said, putting out his hand and drawing her down again on to the bench. 'You shouldn't be so vivacious just because I didn't jump up and say I'd rush off to the unknown young woman on the spot. I need to think it over, surely. In the first place, who is she? I know you've some one in your head. Sit down now and tell me all about her, and let's talk it over comfortably. Who is she? Out with it. Who is she?'

Lady Ayrton swallowed down the lump in her throat—she had lived to be thankful to Wilfred for small mercies. She cleared her voice before she replied.

'You scarcely know her—the—the girl I should like you to marry. But you have seen her and you have seen her people. My very old and dearest friend is her mother. I mean Lady Christina Verney. The girl I am thinking of is her daughter Aveline.'

Mr. Ayrton gave a low whistle. 'That girl,' he ejaculated; '*she's* got no tin.'

Lady Ayrton repressed a slight gesture of disgust. 'Oh, Wilfred,' she said, 'is there nothing better than that in you—nothing of what I hoped for when you were a little innocent baby? Do you not care for anything except money?'

'It isn't money I care for—it's what it does. There's no getting on without it. And I don't see that it would mend matters for me to burden myself with a wife and family,' he replied, half sulkily and half with a clumsy attempt at jocularity.

'You said something about having no one but me to care for you. Would you not like to have a wife who would care for you? And if you married to please him, I—I scarcely like to say so much—but I think your father would do a great deal. He might even give you the Garthdean property at once, and you know that brings in an income even you could not grumble at.'

Wilfred's small eyes sparkled.

'Garthdean,' he repeated, whistling again; 'Garthdean! Do you really mean what you say, my lady?' his way of addressing his mother when in rare and high good-humour. 'Yes, that is worth thinking about, and no mistake. But why have you both taken such a fancy to this girl? I don't remember much about her. She's tall and fair-haired and very quiet—not much go in her. Isn't that the girl?'

'She is an exceedingly good girl, very well brought up, and one that both your father and I could love as a daughter,' replied Lady Ayrton. 'And the Verneys are poor—very poor—for their position; and, with their large family, they would be glad to have Aveline well settled, and—I think she is the sort of girl to appreciate being chosen for herself.'

'You mean that she'd think me disinterested, and all that sort of thing, if I chose her, when of course, if that Garthdean business is settled as you say, I could do so much better,' said Wilfred, coarsely.

His mother looked at him with again that painful sensation of disgust.

'You could *not* do better, even according to your own very practical way of putting it,' she said coldly. 'The Garthdean business, as you call it, will certainly depend on your readiness to please us in this matter of your marriage.'

Wilfred looked sulky again.

'I call that rather hard lines on a fellow,' he said. But as his mother made no answer, he added after a moment or two—'I'll think about it. I daresay she's not a bad sort of a girl.' Inwardly he said to himself, 'She's a stupid, sleepy creature, I fancy. If she had a pretty house, and some old women and school children to look after, I daresay she wouldn't interfere.—I'll think it over,' he repeated aloud.

'You will do well,' said his mother. Then she stood up and proposed to walk to that side of the 'Place' whence the view is so beautiful and far-reaching. Wilfred for his part would have preferred mingling with the crowd, and passing the green-and-gold costume, but he thought it wiser to be conciliatory at the present juncture. And Lady Ayrton seemed ready to be more insistent than usual.

'If this *is* to be the turn with him,' she thought, with again a faint flutter of hope of better things in her faithful mother's heart, 'I must keep him about me as much as I can. I should like people to notice it.'

And she exerted herself to be lively and entertaining, smiling and even laughing a little when they met some of their acquaintance, so that more than one of the English visitors remarked it, and said to themselves that it could not be true that Mr. Ayrton was so disreputable, his mother and he looked so happy together!

But no one heard the deep sigh that she gave as she stood at last, with her gentle tired face turned to the sky, against which the great snow-covered heights of the Pyrenees shone out in pure, lonely majesty.

'Am I doing wrong?' she thought. 'It is so difficult to know. Heaven and pure disinterested goodness seem *so* far away, and life is so perplexing. Why was he not a girl? I might have succeeded better.'

She glanced at her son as these thoughts passed through her mind. He was not even pretending to look at the magnificent panorama before him—his heavy-featured face, redder from the sunshine and the heat, was smiling half sulkily at the antics of some little dogs growling and snarling a few paces off, as he stood there, stolid, thick-set, and self-satisfied—of the earth, alas, and very earthy.

'I will go home now,' said Lady Ayrton, with a slight shiver, hot though it was. 'Come with me to the beginning of our street, Wilfred, and then you can return here, if you like.'

Her spirits rose a little when she found herself alone again. After all, she had not altogether failed in her first attempt—she could write a cheerful and encouraging letter to 'Christina' about their 'plans.'

'Dear Christina,' thought the poor woman to herself, 'how I wish she were here! No one can ever understand me and all my troubles as well as she does—ah, dear, she thinks want of

money the worst trouble, but I can't agree with her when I think of her children—those sweet girls, and her fine, intelligent, manly boys.'

A long letter was despatched to London in answer to the one we have followed thence to its destination—a letter which Lady Ayrton greatly enjoyed writing, and which caused a smile of pleasant expectation to light up the face of Aveline's mother when she had read it.

'Nothing could promise better,' she said to herself. 'I felt sure Sir Francis would act liberally if the idea were really suggested. And, indeed, what could they wish for more? They don't need money—and one of *my* daughters as his wife will be the very making of the young man. If I could but put a *little* more worldly wisdom, a little more practical common sense into Aveline —but it will come—doubtless it will come.'

CHAPTER III.

MADAME DE BONCŒUR 'received' on Sunday evenings. She begged her friends to come early: she was, so she said, 'old-fashioned' in her ideas and past the age to remodel them. She was, in point of fact, a good deal older than she looked—old enough to be proud of the distinction of years, to be more inclined to add one on than to take one off, and to enjoy the look of incredulity with which strangers, especially if they were foreigners, received her announcement of the sixty-nine 'winters' she had seen.

'Yes,' she would say, 'I have lived through many changes, outlived many good and some bad things, but the world has not grown cold to me yet. I speak of my "winters" because the association better suits my white hair and my withered skin, not because I find the world wintry. Surely not; on the contrary, I am in no hurry to leave it, though that must be as the good God wills, of course. I live again in my children and my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren, the little dears. Yes, Jeanne has two boys, and her brother Séverin's wife had her first child, a magnificent little girl, last month. My daughter's daughter is not yet married, a trifle difficult to please perhaps; but it will come all in good time; and, indeed, I scarcely know what I shall do without her when that day *does* come, my good

little Modeste! But we parents must not be selfish: a bad thing to delay marriage too long, as I always remind my daughter de Villers. And Modeste is reasonable, in no way fantastic; it will be all right.'

So the old lady would chatter on, though even to her most intimate friends never too long or too exclusively on her own affairs, her bright eyes and pretty gestures enhancing the charm of her conversation, so that after a first interview every one went away delighted, sure to remark to the first common acquaintance, 'how lovely Madame de Boncœur must have been in her youth!' The delight remained, and usually deepened into hearty liking and esteem, but the faith in her bygone beauty had to be abandoned. It was well known that as a young and even middle-aged woman the Baronne had been rather remarkably plain; as is the case in certain landscapes, the partial decay of late autumn had brought with it to her a beauty unknown to her summer or spring.

Her daughter, Madame de Villers, had been, and at forty-two still was, much handsomer than Madame de Boncœur at her best. But, though handsome and amiable with the amiability of a somewhat self-concentrated and lethargic nature, she was without the elder lady's 'charm,' and, besides this, incontestably less intelligent. Modeste de Villers was as handsome as her mother, as bright and sympathetic as her grandmother, bidding fair, when time and experience should have matured her faculties, to be as intelligent and cultivated. Already she had profited much by constant intercourse with Madame de Boncœur, with whom, since the death of Monsieur de Villers, she and her mother had almost entirely lived.

It was a pleasant house to visit at—a convenient lounge of a Sunday evening for those who only cared to pass the time agreeably, a centre of lively talk and varied opinions for the more active-minded. For Madame de Boncœur, 'old-fashioned' though she liked to call herself, was not so in the narrow sense of the expression. Or rather, perhaps it would be more correct to say, her 'old fashions,' the social opinions and creeds of the France of her day, were less narrow in some notable respects than those of more modern French society.

To give but one instance in point. She had no prejudice or prepossessions against foreigners, for in her youth the salons of Paris received and welcomed many of the most 'irreproachable' families of the European upper classes. Foreign travel was not

then a mere question of money, open to the all and sundry who can afford it. The rush of tourists, who, having spent six weeks in Switzerland, steamed down the Rhine, and visited the Sainte Chapelle guide-book in hand, think they have seen 'the Continent,' was yet to come. And, still more important from the social point of view, there were in those days English and other foreign families making their homes in Paris and other continental towns for longer or shorter periods, whose reasons for thus pitching their tents in strange lands would bear inquiring into, without risk of some tragic or piteous or, still worse, scandalous revelation resulting therefrom.

So Madame de Boncœur enjoyed the entertaining of strangers, and as her relations with English society dated back some one or two generations, so far nothing had shocked her delicate perceptions, or startled her into resolving that she must close her doors to her neighbours from across the Channel.

Her salon was rather unusually crowded this Sunday evening on which we first visit it. The Paris season—earlier a few years ago than now—was at its height, and on this particular Sunday the sudden collapse of one or two expected entertainments had left a good many people at a loss what to do with themselves.

The buzz of talk was becoming bewildering, a few guests were beginning to think of withdrawing, when the double doors again flew open to admit a tall young man, who at once made his way across the two rooms to the white-haired hostess. For a minute or two, busy talking to those near her, she did not see him. He stood waiting quietly, with a simple ease of bearing devoid of the slight awkwardness an Englishman usually feels and shows in such circumstances. Yet he *was* English—a glance at his figure, an instant's gleam from his pleasant blue eyes, told the story, though his hair and complexion were dark enough to perplex those French critics who can only think of us as sandy or flaxen. And something too in his manner, a ready grace, a touch of respectful deference, as he gently took and bowed over the little thin old hand at last held out to him by Madame de Boncœur, was scarcely 'English.'

'Welcome at last, dear sir,' said the old lady, cordially. 'But you are very late! I hear—I am sorry to hear—that the serious illness of the old duke has stopped my cousin's ball this evening—so you mean to make up for your tardiness by staying later than you sometimes do, I hope.'

'I confess that idea had suggested itself to me, dear madame,'

he replied, with a smile, in fluent and *almost* accentless French. 'I should have come earlier had I been going on to the ball. As it was, I waited to finish some letters, counting on your well-known indulgence.'

'Better late than never in your case assuredly,' she answered. 'I particularly wished to see you. I have some news which will interest you I think. Wait till the rooms are cleared a little, and then we can have our chat. There is my daughter, and Modeste. They will be as charmed as ever to see you.'

And with a little wave of her hand the old lady sent him off to the other room, where Madame de Villers and her daughter were standing near the piano.

By these ladies too, Mr. Hereward, for such was the name of the young man, was cordially greeted, Madame de Villers extending three fingers, and her daughter bowing with a pleasant smile.

'You have a very crowded reception this evening,' he said to the elder lady.

'Yes,' she replied, 'there is nothing else to do, I suppose—two dances have fallen through, you know.'

'I know of one having done so,' Mr. Hereward said, 'but I hardly think that would make much difference to your salon, except that it may have allowed people to stay a little later—every one likes so much to come here.'

'And my mother likes to have them,' Madame de Villers replied. 'The more crowded her rooms are, the better spirits she is in. I don't care so much for the world, I don't like the trouble of it. But I foresee that Modeste will be her grandmother over again. She takes so much interest in everything—she even says sometimes she would like to travel—to foreign countries, I mean,' and Madame de Villers opened her sleepy eyes to express her astonishment. 'I confess I don't understand *that*. We are fortunate in making pleasant foreign acquaintances without leaving our own country.'

Mr. Hereward bowed in acknowledgment of the implied compliment.

'Modeste,' continued her mother, 'is looking forward eagerly to making acquaintance with the daughters of an old friend of ours who is coming to Paris soon. Madame, or rather I suppose I should say, Miladi Christine Verney. I do not understand your English titles. Her husband, it appears, is only plain 'monsieur.' Do you know them?'

Mr. Hereward had not been listening very attentively. Madame de Villers' voice was slightly monotonous, and it was in general quite easy to go on thinking of other things, while nominally, so to speak, engaged in conversation with her. His eyes had been wandering about, and just as she left off talking they had been caught by something in the figure and pose of a tall girl at the other end of the room, which reminded him of some one else.

'If the hair were several shades fairer,' he was saying to himself. 'The colour of the hair makes a great difference—the way it is done, and the shape of the head are very like. I wish she would turn this way. No, better not perhaps, it would destroy the illusion.'

He started as Madame de Villers touched him on the arm with her fan.

'What are you thinking of, my dear sir?' she said, smiling. 'Twice I have asked you if you know this English family—these old friends of ours, and you don't seem to hear.'

Mr. Hereward coloured to the roots of his hair.

'I beg your pardon—ten thousand pardons,' he said. 'I am frightfully ashamed of myself. I did not catch the name you mentioned. Will you say it again?'

It was true that Madame de Villers' French pronunciation of the name had prevented its attracting the young man's attention. Even now she had to repeat it more than once before his slightly bewildered ears took it in. Then suddenly his whole face lighted up.

'Verney, did you say, madame?' he repeated. 'Lady Christina Verney? Know them?—of course I know them very well indeed. Are they coming to Paris did you say? I had not heard of it.'

'I wonder you did not know. You in your official position should hear of such things sooner than any one, for this gentleman, it appears, is coming over—sent by your Government, I suppose—on some mission, I don't know what. Some financial matter between the two countries.'

Mr. Hereward's face cleared still further.

'Ah,' he said, 'I understand. I knew some one was coming over, but I did not know Mr. Verney had been fixed upon. A very good choice, too. They will probably be here some time, then.'

'Some months,' said Modeste de Villers, who, though she had been standing near, had not yet spoken. 'I am so pleased, for I

am sure these young ladies must be charming. Bonne maman says she is sure they are very well brought up.'

Mr. Hereward smiled. It was not often he had heard Mademoiselle de Villers say so much, for the typical French girl has far less to say for herself than our English maidens. Modeste spoke with a rather prim childishness, and yet quiet self-confidence, quite indescribable to those who do not know it. But it was quaint and pretty, especially as the girl herself was decidedly pretty, and had a soft and musical voice.

The young Englishman's smile somewhat disconcerted her. She blushed slightly, and a slight look of misgiving crossed her face.

'You smile, monsieur,' she said. 'Was it at anything I said?'

'Not at all,' said Mr. Hereward, hastily, a little ashamed of himself. Madame de Villers, by this time fatigued by her unusual energy, had sunk into an arm-chair, from whence she could scarcely, through the music, hear what her daughter was saying. 'That is to say, there was nothing to cause a smile in what you said, mademoiselle. I smiled from several causes, but all pleasant ones. Among others I was picturing you and Miss Verney together. You would make a charming picture.'

'How? Is she at all like me?' asked Modeste, with quiet girlish curiosity which made her manner more natural.

'No, she is quite different. There would be the charm of contrast. She is exceedingly fair—fair even for an English girl. Her sister, on the contrary, is as dark as you, mademoiselle.'

'Her sister—how old is she? Are there two grown-up daughters?' asked Modeste.

'No, only one. The second one, Leonora, is quite young—fifteen, sixteen—I don't know exactly. And there are several still younger boys and girls of all ages. But I do not know much of any of them, except——' Mr. Hereward hesitated, 'except of Lady Christina, and—I used to meet Miss Verney, of course, at dances and evening parties.'

Mademoiselle de Villers looked up at Mr. Hereward with a peculiar expression in her brown eyes. It was not often that she talked so much to a young man—but this was an Englishman; that made all the difference. She had heard a good deal from her grandmother about English manners and customs, for Madame de Boncœur considered herself a great authority on the subject, and something in Mr. Hereward's tone had suggested a vague

suspicion that here might be one of the curious instances of young people in England managing their own affairs, of which hints had reached her. Modeste felt suddenly venturesome.

'Is Miss Verney pretty?' she asked abruptly, still keeping her eyes fixed on the young diplomatist.

'Pretty,' he repeated; 'no, mademoiselle, she is not pretty. I should rather say she was beautiful.'

'Ah!' said Modeste, with a half audible sigh of satisfaction. Her instinct had been right. There was a flush of unusual colour on the girl's pale face as she turned away.

'I should like to marry some one who would speak of *me* in that tone,' she thought. 'Monsieur Tercy St.-Ange would never have done so, I am sure.—Yes, bonne maman, I am coming,' for her grandmother's voice summoning her to her side sounded across the room.

An hour later the salons were all but deserted.

'I shall hope to call on Friday' (which was Madame de Boncœur's afternoon at home), said Mr. Hereward, as he approached his hostess to say good-night, 'and then, if you are less engaged, perhaps you will tell me about our friends' coming. It is too late to-night—you, madame, must be tired.'

'Not so tired as all that,' said the bright old lady, motioning the young man to a chair by her side. 'Stay five minutes. What was it I wanted to say? Oh, yes. This good Christine has written to ask me to help her to find a house. But I am putting the cart before the horse, surely. Had I told you the news that my friends—and your friends also, the Verney family—are coming to Paris?'

'You yourself had not told me, but I have just heard it from Madame de Villers,' he replied.

'Ah, that is all right then. My old head is not as clear as it used to be. Miladi sends messages of remembrance to you in case I should see you. But I am quite embarrassed about this question of a house. She says "house," but she must mean an *appartement*, not a *hôtel*. It is several years since she was in Paris—perhaps she forgets?'

'She must certainly mean an *appartement*,' answered Mr. Hereward, with decision. 'The Verneys are far from rich—they could not afford a *hôtel*. And furnished *hôtels* are not easy to find—as you know. Shall I look about a little—I had to do so for my sister last year—and report to you what I see? We are not very busy just now.'

He spoke with an evident eagerness which did not escape the quick-sighted old lady.

'It is most amiable of you,' she replied. 'And you will probably know better than I, both what they want and what they can afford to give. I know all about English tastes and ways, of course—but you, having seen them all more recently, may be better acquainted with their particular likes and dislikes. Then shall we leave it so? You will look about as you did for madame your sister, and you will report to me? And of course, if necessary, I or my daughter could go and see any *appartement*. Yes—it is an excellent idea.'

There was an unmistakable tone of relief in the old lady's voice which caused Mr. Hereward an invisible smile. He would have liked to lead her on to speak more of the Verneys, but he judged it wiser not to do so.

There will be plenty of opportunity for my hearing all she has to tell,' he reflected, and for the moment he looked about for some other subject of conversation.

'I did not see St.-Ange this evening,' he said suddenly. 'He has been here so regularly of late that one misses him.'

'Yes,' said Madame de Boncœur, composedly, 'we have seen a good deal of him this year. He is an excellent young man. He will be here again next week, I dare say.' She looked up at Mr. Hereward quickly as she spoke. Something in his expression decided her to say more.

'You have heard a rumour perhaps that he—that something has been in question with regard to this gentleman and my little Modeste,' she said.

Mr. Hereward felt and looked slightly awkward. He had heard the rumour—had been indeed assured that it was more than a rumour. Madame de Boncœur smiled at his embarrassment.

'Do not look so unhappy about it,' she said. 'You English do amuse me sometimes. It is the simplest thing in the world. I was only going to ask you, as you know several of Monsieur St.-Ange's friends, to contradict it. It is always best to have no misunderstandings about such things.'

'Then it is certainly not to be?' asked Mr. Hereward.

'Not to be,' said the old lady. 'He is excellent, as I said, and for many reasons we should have liked it. But they have seen enough of each other now to judge, and Modeste does not care for him.'

'And he?'

'He has never been sure enough of her to allow himself to get exceedingly attached to her. He would never care for any girl who did not really care for him. Perhaps it is that very want of fervour about him which has lost his chance. However, there is no harm done—far better than your English way of rushing into a thing without reflection, and discovering the want of congeniality afterwards.'

'But, madame,' began the young man, eagerly, 'I assure you——'

'Ah, yes—ah, yes—I know what you would assure me! I have heard it all so often. That there are so many happy marriages in England,&c., &c. Well, so there are in France! Mind, I speak of the present day. I am not so wedded to the past as to defend the old system, which you English still believe in as devoutly as many French believe that you all still dine like Germans at one o'clock, and that nothing is to be seen on your tables but half raw roast beef!'

'*I* have not found the French so ignorant,' said Mr. Hereward, with a smile.

'Perhaps not, because you have known principally those of Paris, the most cosmopolitan capital in the world; still more, your acquaintances are not only of the quite upper classes, but many of them people of the day—who *cannot* be so ignorant. But wait till you know some of our regular old country families —people who never leave their châteaux. Then talk of ignorance

'It is much the same in all countries, I suppose,' he replied. 'It is astounding how little we know of each other when one considers what a mere strip of water separates us physically. And though we English travel so much more, I doubt if we know much more of the *people* of other nations, speaking generally, than they know of us. We see the places, but that tells nothing of the home life.'

'You know *less* of us in that sense than we know of you,' said Madame de Boncœur, decidedly. 'Your novels, even though so seldom to be compared with ours as works of art, can be and are far more widely read by foreigners than ours, and their constant theme is English home-life. Then, too, you are so much more quickly hospitable than we. Such of us as do go to England are at once admitted into the real family life, whereas it is not one foreigner in a hundred, nay in a thousand, that really sees our inner circles.'

'You have thought a great deal about it,' said Mr. Hereward, admiringly.

Nigel Hereward's head was rather in a whirl as he made his way home. 'I have no reason to suppose it will hurt any one but myself, he reflected, 'and that's my own affair. I may go on scorching my wings if I like. Were it otherwise,' he hesitated, 'in that case I'd try to get away from Paris before they come. I'd do anything rather than risk suffering for *her*. But her mother is a sensible woman, and she has never seemed to mind throwing us together; she must know her own child, and, of course, she knows *I* can't dream of marrying for years and years, if, indeed, ever. No, I don't see but that I may make myself miserable with a clear conscience—it's no one else's business. Dear me, how little I imagined when I went to Madame de Boncœur's to-night what I was going to hear.'

He stood still on the bridge—he was just then crossing the river from the old street where he had spent the evening on his way to the Champs Elysées quarter where he lived. The stars in the cloudless sky overhead were reflected in the clear dark water below, the fresh night air seemed unusually reviving and inspiriting, everything spoke to him of hope and happy augury. It is so easy at five-and-twenty to think that one's wildest dreams may be realised.

'Who knows,' thought Nigel to himself, as he at last walked on, 'who knows what may turn up? My great-uncle Fortescue may leave me a legacy after all, or Roderick's babies may all die of the croup—nay, what a shame of me to think of such a thing even in joke!'

And with a laugh he stepped on lightly

There was a letter on his table when he let himself in—a letter from his step-sister. He ran through it hastily; it contained nothing of much interest. But as a postscript she had added, 'I hear Sir Francis and Lady Ayrton and their son are going to stay in Paris on their way home. Be civil to them, as they are neighbours of ours.'

'That little beast!' ejaculated Nigel. 'I wonder if he's improved since the licking Seaforth and I gave him at school as a finish up. If not—I certainly pity his belongings.'

(*To be continued.*)

At the Sign of the Ship.

IS there, or was there ever, any such thing as genius? This question has provoked a comfortable little discussion among American men of letters. Mr. W. D. Howells appears to think that there is no such thing as genius, or at least that there is none at present. Mr. Artemus Ward himself once remarked that nobody was going around wearing the mantle of Shakespeare 'to any extent,' and, so far, we may perhaps all agree with him and Mr. Howells. But on the general topic, as to the existence of genius (literary genius especially), there is room for doubt. Mr. E. C. Stedman, the American critic, does believe in the existence of genius. In the *New Princetown Review* he argues against a doctrine which Mr. Howells seems to think grateful and comforting. As far as I understand the controversy, I am on the side of Mr. Stedman. Mr. Howells' doctrine appears to be that what we commonly call genius (as in the case of Thackeray, Coleridge, and so forth—the examples are my own) is merely a higher degree of industrious intelligence, such as we admire in various men of letters. Perhaps this may be an impregnable position, but it defends too wide a space of ground. Perhaps mind may be only a higher degree of matter, and perhaps matter may be only a more concrete form of mind. Both views have been argued, with much comfort, by philosophers. But ordinary men do make a distinction of kind between mind and matter, between life and death, and even between genius and intelligent application.

* * *

Old philosophers recognised the distinction. We are familiar with Plato's theory of 'a divine madness' or inspiration. This was but another word for that surprising power of rising above everything familiar and expected into the realm of new creations, which we call genius in literature. Thackeray felt it when he astonished himself by the scene between Becky, Rawdon, and

Lord Steyne, in Curzon Street. Wordsworth showed the same inspiration (probably without astonishing himself in the least) in the moments 'when Nature seems to take the pen out of his hand, and to write for him.' Genius, in Wordsworth's case, was emphatically a wind that bloweth where it listeth. It is easy to discriminate the inspired passages of *Tintern Abbey* from the passages which are mere flat moralising of William Wordsworth, deeply and undesirably self-conscious of his own peculiar moral merits as a lover of Nature. But all these examples of genius, and any others that might be given, are not, after all, arguments. They are only statements of personal impressions. What are we to say to a disputant who sees nothing in the Becky scene that any ordinary novelist might not have written, or who thinks that *Tintern Abbey* is all on one level of excellence? There is really no standard but 'as the man of taste may determine,' and how are we to take a *plébiscite* of men of taste? One may have an impression that, on this topic, they agree with Mr. Stedman, and think the opinions of Mr. Howells an interesting paradox. But we cannot decide the cause, and can only console ourselves with the old comfortable saw, *Securus judicat orbis terrarum.*

* * *

Dr. Johnson, the old dictator, is probably at the bottom of this heresy about genius and its non-existence. A sentence in his Life of Abraham Cowley is the text of such discourses. 'The true genius,' said Johnson, 'is a mind of large general powers, accidentally determined to some particular direction.' On this showing, Thackeray might have become a Napoleon or Warren Hastings, if he had gone to Haileybury and not to Charterhouse, or Lord Randolph Churchill might have been a lyric poet, if his general powers had been accidentally determined 'to that particular direction.' But Johnson himself, in this very Life of Cowley, seems to be far from intending his maxim to mean all that it seems to imply. 'Yet great labour, directed by great abilities, is never wholly lost,'—the result may be 'ingenious absurdity.'

* * *

It would be, indeed, a melancholy and futile thing to persuade mankind that by dint of industry they can make themselves the equals of the great, inspired by 'a certain madness from the gods.'

Possibly we have not in this generation, in literature, examples of genius so brilliant as to make sceptics believe that it actually exists. Yet methinks there are sparks of it in a writer or two, still on the side of youth, and we should not weary of expecting more tokens that genius has not deserted the world. To acquiesce, still more to rejoice, in this literary pessimism, to long for literary equality, is to act as Johnson thinks Milton might have done. Like a poet, Milton seems to have thought that poetry was a child of the Sun-god, and that it was a drawback to have been born in the frosty North. But he should not have regretted it, says Johnson; he should have been content with eminence 'among this lagging race of frosty grovellers.' Perhaps we, too, are 'a lagging race of frosty grovellers,' but that would be nothing to rejoice over. Perhaps Johnson gave his own measure as a judge of genius, when he said, of *Lycidas*, 'In this poem there is no nature, for there is no truth; there is no art, for there is nothing new. Its form is that of a pastoral—easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting.' How could a man speak, with authority, on genius in literature who declared and believed that Milton's sonnets 'deserve no particular criticism; for of the best it can only be said that they are not bad; and perhaps only the eighth and twenty-first are truly entitled to this slender commendation'? There must have been, when the great and well-beloved doctor wrote this, a good deal of 'frosty grovelling.'

* * *

It is not uncomplimentary to the Celtic spirit, I hope, to say that the Celtic spirit is a little impracticable. 'They don't know what they want, and they won't be satisfied till they get it,' said an Irish orator of his own countrymen. This is the aspiring temper, incapable of yielding to circumstances, which Mr. Matthew Arnold calls 'Titanic' when it exhibits itself in literature. The ancient Celts had a law, it appears, which punished a man who, when arrayed in line of battle, 'stuck out too much in front.' This contempt of circumstances, which made the Celts of old decline to be frightened even by earthquakes, displays itself in the whole Celtic land difficulty. Land cultivated in a certain fashion, that is in small lots, does not pay in some places. A Teuton would therefore give up his farm. But the Celt won't; he just stops there.

A few weeks ago I had the chance to see a very wretched sight,

a Highland eviction, which illustrated these Titanic Celtic qualities.

It was a very wet afternoon, and I was walking along Strathwhacket (let us call it), in conversation with a charming old Highlander. He carried my rod and creel (empty), but his conversation was as good as any one is likely to find anywhere. He spoke of Montrose's wars, and was not on the side of the Argyles. He spoke of the *Taishtaragh* (I think he called it) or second sight. 'Every man sees three sights in his lifetime they say,' he remarked, and confessed that he had not even seen one 'sight' yet. 'But there is a man at Fort William who sees everything that is going to happen.' I suggested that this gentleman might make a rapid fortune if he would turn his inspired gaze on the British Turf, but at that moment we noticed a great brown smoke hanging in the wet air. It was an eviction. The 'sight' was not of the supernatural kind which the gillie spoke of, but it was fit to make a mark on the memory. Beyond the river there was a high, wooded hill, all blue in the rain. Against this the smoke arose white, and in the midst of the clear red flame the black gables of the burning cottage stood out clear. There were some sappy, green bunches of trees by the gable; on the grass near the roadside a woman was trying to cover her property—chairs, table, an old delf dinner service, all very decent furniture. The old gillie was very much excited, and full of anger and pity. 'The pony saw it,' he said, 'this is what the pony saw.' He referred to a misdemeanour of our pony, which had shied violently as we drove down the road in the morning. To me it seemed that the horse was alarmed by a big sheep which had bounced up under its nose, but my friend credited the pony with the *Taishtaragh*. 'The beasts see things we can't see,' he told me. This gift is very interesting, but it would not comfort me to have my neck broken by a prophetic quadruped, because a farmer I did not know was going to be evicted. The case of the farmer, if it was correctly reported, seemed to illustrate the Titanic Celtic temper very well. He had not paid a penny of rent for four years. The rent may have been high, but he surely might have paid some of it. Yet, though he had economised in rent, he was unable to pay his other creditors, and his stock and cattle had been sold up.

An Englishman would have perhaps thought it well to leave a farm which he could not make profitable, when he had money and stock. But the Celtic tenant simply declined to leave, in spite of many requests and warnings. The burning of his house,

it was said, was an example of *trop de zèle* on the part of the Messenger at Arms, who exceeded his instructions. It was certainly a miserable and ill-advised action. But, as we slowly climbed the hill, and saw the smoke clinging to the valley, and saw the blackened beams of an old family home, we seemed to discern the differences between our race and the Celtic peoples. We have lost the old poetical beliefs, the *Taishtaragh* and the rest of it. No English beater nor under-keeper (except Kingsley's poet of gamekeeping life) could have talked as that old gillie talked, an unschooled man, to whom English was a foreign tongue, half learned. History was tradition to him, a living oral legend. But we can recognise the nature and pressure of facts, without which sad knowledge society would revert into barbarism in a fortnight.

* * *

The dying pauper in the old story was told by the Beadle that 'Heaven was not for the likes of *him*, and he ought to be very thankful to have "another place" to go to.' The following lines express a more unusual discontent of a 'porochial pauper':

TIRED OF TOWNS.

'When we spoke to her of the New Jerusalem, she said she would rather go to a country place in Heaven.'—*Letters from the Black Country.*

I'm weary of towns, it seems a'most a pity
  We didn't stop down i' the country and clem,
And you say that I'm bound for another city,
  For the streets o' the New Jerusalem.

And the streets are never like Sheffield, here,
  Nor the smoke don't cling like a smut to *them*;
But the water o' life flows cool and clear
  Through the streets o' the New Jerusalem.

And the houses, you say, are of jasper cut,
  And the gates are gaudy wi' gold and gem;
But there's times I could wish as the gates was shut—
  The gates o' the New Jerusalem.

For I come from a country that's over-built
  Wi' streets that stifle, and walls that hem,
And the gorse on a common's worth all the gilt
  And the gold of your New Jerusalem.

And I hope that they'll bring me, in Paradise,
  To green lanes leafy wi' bough and stem—
To a country place in the land o' the skies,
  And not to the New Jerusalem.

* * *

The society in Bath (in Roman times) must have been as queer as in the days of Mr. Pickwick. A recent visit to Bath showed that the town was archæologically minded, and proud of possessing a Latin inscription scratched on a leaden plate. The learned read this relic of Roman Bath in three ways, all quite different, but only two of them are printed in the *Guide to the Roman Baths*. The first runs thus, and testifies to the gratitude and generosity of a visitor; also, to the absence of any circulating medium but copper:

'Quintus has bathed Vilbia for me with the water. Along with Cliquatis he has saved her for me by means of *quin . . . tael.* His pay is 500,000 pounds of copper coin or *quinari.*' Then follow names of witnesses. If we only knew what *quin . . . tael* is—can it be quinine cocktail? And what a prodigal fee! 500,000 pounds of coppers! Appius Claudius only offered 'ten thousand pounds in copper' (not in *coppers*) 'to the man that wrings his head!' But it was in actual coppers that the gentleman whose Vilbia was 'washed with the water' showed his gratitude.

The other rendering is less creditable to the manners and common honesty of society in Bath sixteen hundred years ago. 'May the man who stole my tablecloth waste away like water unless he restores it. Parties suspected are Vinna, or Exsupereus, Verianus, Severinus, Augustalis, Corintianus, Catusminianus, Germanilla, Jovina.' Apparently the owner of the tablecloth had given a little dinner, and his guest had stolen his tablecloth. Probably it was a practical joke of pretty little Jovina's.

Perhaps both translations are wrong, but both are deeply affecting in their revelations of human nature.

* * *

The psychology of the Bold Bad Boy has often been attempted. In the following stanzas a young lady offers her notion of the Bold Bad Boy, who seems to combine cynicism with sentiment, and to be not unread in Bret Harte.

* * *

LEGEND OF THE CROSSING-SWEEPER.

By M. K.

The boarders look so good and new,
  A saint it would annoy.
To squirt upon them two by two
  Would be my greatest joy.
The boarders think—I know it's true—
  I am a wicked boy.

But one—I've never known *her* stare
  As if I were a wall
That had no business to be there,
  Or anywhere at all.
And once—to stop she didn't dare—
  She let a sixpence fall.

She smiled to show she couldn't wait,
  And gently said 'Good-night!'
You bet I pulled my cap off, straight,
  I nodded all my might.
But now she seldom comes. I hate
  To see her look so white.

There is a place—*she'll* go some day,
  Right up above the sky,
It is uncommon bright and gay,
  Swells live there when they die
If they are good. Some say *we* may,
  But that is all my eye.

They stand with harps and crowns in rows
  For doing all they should.
But I should miss her, I suppose.
  I'd save her if I could—
Only a boy that never goes
  To Sunday school 's no good.

And I'm the worst boy in the town.
  I lark, I fight, I swear,
I knock the other fellows down
  And lick them. I don't care.
They'll give her such a harp and crown,
  But I shall not be there.

Those crowns—if one could hang about
  The gate till all was done.
She'll stand in a white gown, no doubt,
  With gold hair like the sun.
I'd like to see them given out—
  I'd never ask for one.

ANDREW LANG.

The "Donna."

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[illegible]

[illegible] will be good enough to [illegible] any article they wish to [illegible] [illegible] should [illegible] in case of non- [illegible] responsible for acci-

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'Cease, every joy, to glimmer on my mind, but leave, oh! leave the light of hope behind!'

THE STUDY OF THE STOMACH IS THE STUDY OF MORALITY.

'Oh! who would pique himself on mind whose use Depends so much upon the gastric juice?'

THE ART of CONQUEST IS LOST
WITHOUT
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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 1886.

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DECEMBER 1886.

Children of Gibeon.

BY WALTER BESANT.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER XXXI.

HOME AGAIN.

CLAUDE withdrew from Ivy Lane. Heavens! without Valentine how desperately mean and squalid the place appeared! Even Melenda and Lizzie, now neat and 'respectable,' were incongruous amid such surroundings! As was Ivy Lane without her, so would be his whole life without her.

He stayed in his chambers all that Sunday afternoon, expecting a visit from his father. But there was no visit. What was he doing? And why had not the old letter-writer returned? All day he sat in the quiet rooms looking over the empty courts, while his feet were drawn as by a magnet towards the west of London. Persons who are afflicted with a constant drouth are drawn to public-houses as by strings; but lovers towards their mistresses by ropes and hawsers. When it grew dusk he went to his club with a sense of safety because he could not be disturbed there, and after dinner he repaired to the house where he fain would be all day long.

'I am very glad to see you again, Claude.' Lady Mildred welcomed him with unwonted warmth. 'You have been a brother indeed, and more than a brother, to Valentine. She has told me all

that you have done for her. And now, before you go to see the girls —Violet is very well and is longing to see you again—sit down and tell me something about your summer. I am afraid you have been a prisoner, from your own point of view. I want to know exactly what it is that Valentine has done. All I can get from her, except by parenthesis, is an enthusiastic account of what you have done. But you are looking ill, my dear boy, ill and worried. Is anything troubling you?'

'Yes, one or two things are troubling me a great deal. I will tell you about them afterwards.'

Then he began to talk about Valentine's life among these poor folk of Ivy Lane, and because it was a really fine theme, and he had been watching the subject of it closely for three long months, during which he had thought of nothing else but the girl and her courage and her patience, he spoke eloquently and even with burning words. It was a rare spirit indeed which had persevered until Melenda was conquered, which had saved Lizzie and nursed Lotty. And if Claude's lips were touched with flame, and his eyes glowed, it was not only because he loved the damsel, but also because he admired her deeds.

Lady Mildred listened and watched him curiously, as if trying to read something unexpressed—something between the lines.

'And your own part in all this, Claude; you have not spoken of yourself.'

'Oh, my part. I am Valentine's servant, her Vizier.' But he hesitated and dropped his eyes, because he would have to confess that he had deliberately thrown away all those gods which formerly he had worshipped.

'More than a servant, Claude, I think. What is this I hear about your self-sacrifice?'

The young man blushed. Nobody likes to be suddenly accused of such a virtue as self-sacrifice, which is at once rare, difficult of attainment, and much admired.

'It seems to me a very serious thing, this that you propose, my dear boy,' Lady Mildred went on; 'you have always been ambitious from the very beginning. Nobody has begun better than you; none of your contemporaries has a better chance. There is, I am assured by those who know, a really splendid prospect before you. Think well before you throw it away. There is a successful practice before you; in course of time, perhaps, a seat upon the Bench—even in the future a peerage—anything is possible for such a man as you—including, if you are wise enough

to wait until success is assured, such a marriage, with such connections, as will advance your children as well as yourself. Wealth and distinction are as certainly within your grasp as can be humanly predicted, and you propose to throw them away. Are they things, then, of no value to you? Claude, if you have consented to this sacrifice only to please the whim of a girl, I cannot, I must not allow it to be carried into effect without remonstrance.'

'Valentine has no whims—she has purposes. But, indeed, even if it was at first by her entreaties that I consented to change the plan of my life, that no longer remains the only reason. My old plans are abandoned of necessity—there is not left to me any choice but a life of obscurity.'

'Why have you no choice?'

'Do you remember, Lady Mildred, how, long ago, you took me to Westminster Abbey to hear a great preacher, and to see the tombs of great men, and to the Courts of Law to look at the judges and hear the barristers, and to the Academy to see the pictures, and to the theatres to see the play; and how, everywhere, you fired my imagination by telling me that this, and this, and everything, was in my reach, if I desired it, and chose to work for it? You made me the most ambitious of boys. Besides, I had to justify things—certain things—my education.'

'You have nobly justified those things, Claude!'

'There never seemed to me anything in the world worth living for, except distinction and success. And now I have to give up all.'

'Why, Claude?'

'I cannot pretend that it is for the sake of my own people—for unselfish motives—I thought I might pretend that, until a fortnight ago. And I cannot pretend that it was for love of a girl, though there is nothing in the world I would not do for Valentine's sake.'

'Claude!'

'No, Lady Mildred, she is not my sister—she thinks she may be, but I know better—my brother Joe told me the truth. He recognised Violet's resemblance to her father and his own daughter, and I love Valentine. One moment, please. I can no longer think that I am giving up my ambition for her sake. I am only a man who must live in obscurity; I am condemned to it because I am overshadowed by a great social disgrace.'

'What disgrace, Claude? What possible disgrace can have fallen upon you?'

'It has become impossible that I should continue to live any longer among gentlemen. I can no longer pretend to associate with them. I must not, for common decency's sake, sit with them or talk with them; I ought not to have come here even, without letting you know the truth before I came. But I only found it out three or four weeks ago. It is my father'—he stopped short with cheeks aflame, for it was a most horrible thing to put into words—'my father is not dead, as I always thought, and as you were told. He has been in prison all these years; he is not an honest man, as my brother Joe always declared; he is a liberated convict: he is at large, with a ticket of leave.'

'O Claude! my poor boy, is this true?'

'Yes. He first made himself known to Valentine, whom he took for his own daughter; she stood between him and my mother, who does not know—yet. She bribed him to silence: I know all now. Valentine had a terrible time with him. Then he broke her conditions and came to me, unknown to her, to my chambers, to the Temple. I dare say he is there at this moment, drinking and smoking. He takes my money: he pawns my things: he comes at all hours of the day and night. Now you know, Lady Mildred, the trouble that has fallen upon me.'

'My poor boy!' she repeated.

'If I do anything or succeed at all, he will be at my elbow, selling his own silence. He takes a delight in the shame he inflicts upon me. He is, I firmly believe—though he is my own father—the worst man that lives. Oh, can there be,' he cried, with a despairing gesture of shame and pain, 'can there be—is there anywhere, in this great city, a man nearer to the gutter than myself? Now you understand why I must go away and hide myself. If I do any work it must be for the people from whom I sprang—if only in atonement—it must be work that will never be spoken about. Is it for me to have ambition? Is such a man as myself to ask for distinction? Why, if I were a Judge to-morrow, I might have to try my own father. My only friends should be the men like myself, whose fathers are in the gaols—the sons of the burglars and thieves of London. And now, Lady Mildred, you understand, do you not, why I am not ashamed, since I have told you all this, to confess that I love Valentine? For a man so fettered and held in bonds might as well love a princess. All day long I hear my father's voice, that mocks at everything honest and true; all day long I say to myself, 'Go back to the slums and work for those who are like yourself,

children of the gaol-birds and the outcasts; and at night I lie awake, waiting for the sound of his footsteps in my room.'

'Claude, my poor boy!'

'I trust only that Violet will never learn the truth. As for the others, sooner or later they will learn it, I suppose. One cannot always keep such a man back, and very soon he will have taken all the money I have.'

'Violet shall never know if I can prevent it. And as for yourself——'

'As for me, my course is clear. What other men do for a few years and of free choice, able to take up and lay down as they please, I must do all my life, and by compulsion. And as for Valentine, I shall go on being her servant. You will trust me, I know you will trust me, never to let her suspect, by any word of mine, that I regard her other than a sister. I have endeavoured—I have always hoped and endeavoured—to be a gentleman.'

'Thank you, Claude.' She pressed his hand with both her own in a kindly and motherly fashion. 'You learned very early, my dear son, the instincts of a gentleman—there is nothing finer in the world than to be a gentleman—and I have always trusted you and always loved you. Oh, my poor boy, I am so sorry for you.' For the first time Lady Mildred kissed him. She laid her hands upon his shoulders and drew his face to her and kissed him on the forehead, while her eyes were full of tears.

Claude turned his head to hide his own. 'I am glad,' he said, 'that I have told you. I can bear it better now that you know.'

'Yes, it is better to tell things to people who love you. As for Valentine, she will always love you—as your sister. I am sure of that. It is good for a young man to love a girl, if she is worthy of him, though he can never win her. Go on loving my daughter, Claude, and, if you please, believe her to be everything that a woman can be, this side the Gates of Heaven. And now,' she added, 'forget your troubles. We will all take counsel how to bribe this man into voluntary exile. You shall be protected somehow. And Violet shall never know; and now go and make the girls happier, Claude. They are longing for you.'

It was immediately after this that Lady Mildred explained some of her views on the situation to her friend and confidante.

'My dear Mildred,' said the latter, 'I cannot believe that any good can come of a girl going to live by herself among the scum.'

'The scum, Bertha, rises to the top.'

'Then the grounds, or the settlings of society, with the drunken and disreputable people, unprotected. Think of the wickedness she must learn.'

'Yes, I suppose that Valentine knows already much more wickedness than both of us put together. It is strange to think of. Yet the knowledge does not seem to do her any harm. She is as sweet as ever and as good, though she looks more womanly. I dare say Eve looked more womanly after she had eaten of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but she would look guilty as well, which my child does not.'

'No, poor thing!'

'When you and I were born, Bertha, our fathers mostly called the people the Mob, or the Common People, or the Lower Orders, or the Lower Classes. They laughed at their ignorance, and expected one thing only of them—respect. Things are changed.'

'They are indeed!'

'We cannot afford to laugh at the ignorance of the people any more, because we have given them all the power, though they don't know yet that they have got it; but they will find out very soon, and then——'

'O Mildred! don't say there is going to be a horrid Revolution, and that we shall all be swallowed up.'

'We have had a long rope if we are to be swallowed up. But I am not afraid of the English people. And as for the Revolution, it has been quietly going on all around us for a hundred years. They will take away class power, and curtail the power of land and capital, Bertha, but they will not guillotine us. We are all orderly people, and do not want to murder each other. But the more we, of our set, learn what working people want and think, and how they judge things, and the more they, for their part, learn what we think about things, the better it will be for all of us, and the safer. Valentine has learned things which she will never forget. Do you think that if there were many girls like her, the workmen of this country could be made, by any stump orator, to look upon rich people as their natural enemies?'

'I like the old ways best,' said Bertha. 'Let the working-man go his way, so long as he behaves himself, and let us go our way. But what will you do about Claude? Of course, if Valentine should turn out not to be his sister after all, they cannot go on together as they have done.'

'That will be for Valentine to determine.'

'But, my dear, the young man might so far forget himself as to fall in love with her.'

'It will be Valentine's business. She will do as she pleases.'

'Would you? But you could not let your daughter marry a young man who has such family connections—a workman brother and a working-girl sister?'

'My dear, I think a woman can never do better than marry a distinguished man. I married Sir Lancelot because everybody said he was distinguished. He has been dead nearly twenty years, and everybody has clean forgotten him, so that, I suppose, there are certain kinds of distinctions which don't last. But as for Claude, I am sure that he will distinguish himself in a way that does last. If one of the girls—the one who is not his sister—were to marry him, she might advance him.'

'But of course they will both love him merely as a brother, which is a safeguard.'

'I don't know. The true sisterly feeling does not grow up in three months. It wants the long years of childhood.'

'We have said nothing about Violet,' said Bertha, after a little.

'What about Violet?'

'I mean about her future, if she should be Claude's sister.'

'Violet in any case will remain with me. She has the artistic temperament, which naturally dislikes rude realities and shrinks from rough people. Artists are full of emotion and sympathy because they are quick to see; yet they are generally touched with a kind of selfishness of their own, which also belongs to the temperament. Now Valentine is not an artist; she neglects the rags, whether they are picturesque or not, and looks for the man below them; she will go back to the rags and roughness, but Violet will remain. Claude will go with Valentine, sister or no sister, and Violet will stay with me.'

'And now I am quite sure,' said Bertha quickly, 'that if Valentine had not been your own daughter, you would not have sent her on this Quixotic errand.'

'You will know to-morrow.'

'Yes,' Bertha repeated, 'I am quite sure. You would never have incurred the terrible responsibility of risking another person's child. Yes. You are a clever woman, Mildred, but I have discovered your secret at last. Well, the son of the soil goes back to the soil. That is wonderful, considering what he must remember about the place. It is not wonderful at all that Violet should refuse to

return, though she cannot remember anything, because she can imagine. But it is to me inexplicable that Valentine should have wanted to go down there at all, and still more wonderful that she should want to return there.'

'Here is Claude at last,' cried Violet, 'Claude at last! O Claude!' She gave him both her hands, and would have liked nothing better than to kiss him on both cheeks. 'How glad I am to see you again, and Valentine again! Is it really you? Sometimes I thought it was all a dream and that there never was any Claude. You have made Val thin, Claude, and you are thin yourself. And she has been having grave fits and telling me dreadful stories about working girls, poor things.'

At that moment Valentine was not grave at all. To be back again in the old home atmosphere; to put on again a dress that was not the plain grey or brown stuff she had worn for three months, but the same dress, or something like it, in which Claude had first seen her, a sweet and dainty confection of white, with lace; and to be again with Violet, filled her with happiness. To Claude she was always more than mortal. And now she was more than a goddess. And she was laughing. Alas! had he ever once succeeded in making her laugh during the whole three months that they had been together every day? Could this really be the same girl who only twenty-four hours since was shrinking in terror from his—his father—Violet's father?

'I think it must have been a dream,' Valentine said, 'unless, perhaps, everything is a dream. The summer, in that case, is only just going to begin; it is still June, and we are considering where we shall go. It is like the last scene in the opera which is the same as the first, and the heroine wakes up to find that it has all been a dream. I suppose there is not any such place as Ivy Lane, is there, Claude? Was there ever a tall old man with grey hair named Mr. Lane? He had a daughter in my dream called Lizzie, and there was a girl named Melenda, and another named Lotty—poor Lotty.'

'And another pretending to be Polly-which-is-Marla,' said Violet. 'No, dear, it isn't a dream, and I have had the most dismal time you can possibly conceive. She looks much too pale, Claude. Do you think she has had enough to eat? O Val! how could you live three months by yourself, and among those horrid people? I hope my relatives behaved with tolerable decency towards you. Did Melenda tear the clothes off your back? Did

Sam make you a Socialist? Did Joe treat you civilly? Tell me, Claude, were they nice at all?'

'Melenda is now my dearest friend,' said Valentine. 'You would not know her if you saw her now.'

'Oh!' The little interjection implied that Violet had no desire to know that young lady more intimately. 'And she has done everything for herself, Claude. Do you think you ought to have permitted it?'

'I am rather ashamed now,' said Valentine, 'of having a lady's-maid.'

'She has actually cleaned her own windows and washed her own cups and saucers. Yet she hasn't spoiled her hands. Why do all housemaids have red hands, then?'

'I confess that I did not really like cleaning up. But it is soon done, and it gives very little trouble.'

'That depends upon the person,' said Violet; 'to me it would give all the trouble in the world. I want everything provided for me, clean, bright, pretty and finished, just as if things grew so, and would always remain so. I don't want to know who made them—no doubt, unpleasant people—or how they came. I like to have everything made for me, brought to me, and presented to me, as a matter of course, just as if I was a Princess by Divine Right. And oh, if I were a Princess, how fervently I should believe in Divine Right!'

'My dear, you will always have everything just exactly as if you were a Princess.'

'Instead of a ——'

'No, Violet, you shall not say it. The strange thing is the way in which mistakes are made and young Princesses get mixed up and served out wrong. Now I am certain that Melenda was meant for a Despotic Sovereign. She would have made an admirable Czarina in the days when they chopped off heads without trial. And Lizzie was born, I am sure, to be a fashionable young lady.'

'And what about that other girl who looked delicate and was lying down?'

'She is dying, Violet,' said Claude, gravely.

'Poor thing! I suppose there is always somebody dying there. We must send her grapes, Val dear.'

Violet belonged to that large school of philanthropists who would treat every painful case with half-a-crown and a basket of grapes. And so great is their sympathy with those who suffer

that they cannot bear even to think of them, much less to talk about them.

'There is tragedy as well as comedy at Hoxton,' said Claude.

Then they fell to talking again in a lighter strain, and they were so happy at being together again that they talked the greatest nonsense imaginable. Claude forgot his troubles and laughed with them, though, for all three, the tears were close behind the laughter, just as in the pools which are sometimes geysers, the bubbles on the surface show the agitation of the waters below. As for Valentine, this return to an atmosphere of peace, where there could be careless talk, was like the wandering down a green glade, beside a little brook, with the birds singing and the flowers at her feet, after a long sojourn in the hot and thirsty sands. She had never appreciated it before. This possibility of careless talk, as if there were no misery in the world that she could cure or cause, or that concerned her. An atmosphere of peace. It is, if you think of it, the choicest possession of the easy classes. Yet they share it with the shepherd on the hill side and the gamekeeper in the woods. Those who live in crowded streets and narrow courts, in tenement houses or in model lodgings, can never breathe this atmosphere of peace. All around them is the buzz and humming of their fellows—not a peaceful murmur as of bees, but an angry, dissatisfied, suffering sound, made up of groans and oaths and lamentations, as well as of the laughter of children and the shouts of those who play.

And Claude was wondering whether the Valentine of this evening could be really the same girl who, twenty-four hours before, stood in the doorway shrinking with terror from a half-drunken and unrepentant convict who called himself her father. In his inexperience, he made no allowance for Reaction. One is never so completely *folâtre* as on the day after a period of great anxiety. Gentlemen, for instance, who have been locked up for a short term are said to exhibit a larklike blitheness and vivacity at the 'friendly lead' which follows their release.

Then Claude wondered, looking at the two girls, how he could ever have entertained the least doubt as to the real Beatrice. For he saw now that the face of Violet was Joe's face, and his own face, and his father's face. And her voice was Joe's, and his own, and—his father's; a soft and sweet voice in her, and in the men a low and musical voice. How could anyone have ever doubted? To be sure, when he saw Violet for the first time he

had not yet seen his father, and he thought less about Joe than about Melenda and Sam. Now Violet was not in the least like Sam and Melenda, who, as we know, 'favoured' their mother.

Authorities are divided as to whether at its best the masculine or the feminine countenance is the more perfect from the artistic point of view. Yet one would have liked, in the days when there was the strongest feeling on the subject, to have said unto Zeuxis: 'Just figure for me in undying colours the most beautiful girl-face that exists anywhere around the shores of the Mediterranean.' English girls about that time were still in the rough, somewhere among the Hercynian forests. 'Next, paint me the same face in its masculine form, and then the same face as a child, as a boy, as a girl, and as an old man, and as an old woman, so that in every age we may have the most perfect type of beauty.' I think that Violet would have done very well for the first type and Claude for the second. Horrible to think of the same face grown old and marked with the seal that stamps the prison-bird! His own face, Claude clearly discerned, and his father's face, were both so plainly drawn in Violet's, that he wondered how there could ever have been the slightest doubt. But very few, of those concerned, had had the pleasure of making Mr. James Carey's personal acquaintance.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE FINDING OF THE INQUEST.

WHEN Claude went back to his chambers, he was disappointed in not finding them already occupied by an elderly gentleman with grey hair, and a fiddle in his hand and a pipe in his mouth. He fully expected to find that gentleman in occupation; he expected to hear him fiddling as he went up the stairs; in fact, he made up his mind while walking home what he should say to him, and he arranged a dramatic scene, short but very effective. He would begin by saying, firmly and calmly, 'You have broken the conditions. I shall therefore discontinue your allowance. You will get no more money from your supposed daughter; and I will take care that the others shall give you nothing. If you attempt to worry my mother she shall be taken out of the almshouse, and placed under proper protection.' At this point his parent would probably

break out into that rude eloquence which is known in Ivy Lane as 'language.'

Then Claude would go on—'I will, however, allow you twenty-five shillings a week, on the condition that you go out of the country — to Guernsey, or Jersey, or somewhere.' A certain amount of filial piety (how much filial piety ought to be expected towards a father who turns out so badly?) would suffer him to be regardless of the language, but he would be firm in refusing to give him anything, except on that one condition. Filial piety, he was sure, was consistent with starving a parent into submission, so long as submission is good for his children. This reduction of obstinacy once effected, one might again consider the Fifth Commandment and its bearings on the case, and how one might contrive to scrape together, somehow, in obedience to the Injunction, a little, if ever so little, honour for one's father; just as the toper squeezes the empty bottle and the miser skins the flint.

Somehow these previously arranged dialogues and dramatic situations never come off as they are intended, so that one always has to fall back upon impromptu words and unforeseen tableaux.

His chambers were empty; the windows were dark; there was no one in King's Bench Walk, except the ghosts of the dead lawyers, who have long since driven away the ghosts of the Knights Templars, and now walk nightly in wigs and gowns, a merry troop, laughing and telling each other the old circuit stories of which barristers are never tired; the stairs echoed to no other footsteps than his own; no one waited for him on the landing: there was no one in the room.

Well, his father had only postponed his visit, that was clear; he would come in the night, or next day, or the day after, because no more money would be sent to him, and he must sooner or later come to terms, because he had no means of getting any. That he would go to Tottenham appeared unlikely, because there was nothing to be got out of a poor old almswoman. There was, indeed, another possibility, which Claude did not take into account, as it was a thing quite outside his own experience. He forgot that his father had a profession—not, it is true, one of the learned professions, but yet a profession which requires the greatest dexterity, a brain full of resource, an eye keen to watch for opportunity, vulpine stealth, and that kind of natural aptitude which, when applied to the arts of poetry, the drama, and fiction, we call Genius. What was there to prevent Mr. Carey from resuming

the active practice of that profession? This, indeed, conducted with the greatest caution, and, if necessary, supplemented by an occasional levy upon his son and daughter, was the scheme of life contemplated by the enlarged captive. He nourished thoughts, also, of a second course of public glory; he would again be the head of the profession. Fate, as too often happens, prevented the accomplishment of this design; otherwise, the end of Mr. Carey's history and of this story would have been different.

Then Claude, with dismal forebodings of a nocturnal visit, went to bed. The Temple was perfectly quiet; there was no noise from the river, which by day is not at all a silent highway, and none from the Embankment; there were no steps on the gravel and in the court below. He lay awake waiting for the soft footfall which he knew and dreaded, or for the light click of the burglar's key unlocking his door; once or twice he thought that the man must be actually in his rooms, and he got up and looked into his keeping room in order to satisfy himself. Two or three more such nights as this and he should go mad; when at length he did fall asleep, worn out by the long vigil of Saturday night and by his own anxieties, it was to dream that his father stood by his bedside threatening that he would never leave him, that he would remain with him night and day, all the rest of his life, that he would never be out of his sight or out of his thoughts for a single moment.

That dream will in a way be fulfilled; Claude will never cease to have his father with him; he 'can never' be out of his thoughts. Yet this nightmare will not come true in the sense in which it was first understood.

All the morning he remained in his chambers, expecting this visitor, or at least a letter or some kind of message, if only a threatening message. None came at all. The very silence itself was threatening, and all the more because its threatenings were as vague and uncertain as the distant roll of thunder.

In the afternoon Claude resolved to wait within no longer. He would go to Tottenham and satisfy himself that his mother had not been molested.

She had not. He found her walking with her granddaughter, Rhoda, in the sunshine on the flags. She was quite calm and undisturbed, there was no reason for asking her any questions.

Her husband had not been near her, that was certain, since the day when Valentine bought him off. But for her part she asked a thousand questions about Lady Mildred, and how her

daughter had been received, and when she would come back again to see her mother.

'I wouldn't stand in her light, Claude, not if I was never to see her again.' Like all blind people, she spoke of seeing her friends just as if she still had the use of her eyes. 'And if she's happy she must not think too much about me. Not but that she will, for she's that affectionate in her nature that she loves all that loves her and thinks about them day and night. Give me a loving-hearted girl, Claude. Why, as for you, she loves the very ground you tread upon.' Claude started and blushed; one need not blush at being loved by one's sister, but only Rhoda saw the blush, and she was selfishly thinking about her own little ambitions, not about Claude at all. And therefore, though she observed some evidence of emotion, she did not connect it with any cause. 'If you were her sweetheart, my son, she couldn't love you better. She'll sit and talk about you all day long, she will, and never get tired; and makes me tell her again and again, just like as if she was a little girl again, how you took to your book when you was only a little boy, and how you were sent to a grand school by her ladyship, and how you got all the prizes and brought them here for me to see and feel their beautiful leather covers. Oh, she's a good sister, Claude, as well as a good daughter.'

'I suppose she loves Joe and Sam quite as well.'

'Not she, then. She's uppish you know; and Joe, he's a good boy, but he's only a working man, you see. He hasn't got your fine ways; and as for Sam, he's hardly civil with anybody, is he?'

'I am glad you think she loves me, mother,' said Claude, meekly. 'But then, of course it's natural to love her brother, isn't it?'

'Of course it is, my dear. You don't make half enough of her, Claude. As for talking about her, you never do. Nor about yourself either, lately. You've got to be silent, my dear boy. There isn't any trouble, is there? You haven't got caught by some artful hussy, I hope?'

In Mrs. Monument's view, if one of her sons fell in love, he must be caught by an artful hussy. Such is the opinion which women in certain circles entertain as to girls and their wiles. To be sure, a mother is difficult to please in the matter of daughters-in-law.

'No, mother, there is no artful hussy in the case, I assure you. And as for loving Valentine, I am certain no brother in the whole world loves his sister so much. I can say nothing too

good for her. Never dream that I do not think about Valentine, mother.'

'That's well said, Claude. That's a brave boy. Brothers don't generally care about their sisters, more's the pity. If they did there'd be many a poor girl saved from trouble.'

Then Claude went to Ivy Lane, getting there about six o'clock, just before dark. It struck him that the street was unusually animated for the time of day, and he might have guessed that so many people would not have been gathered together at six in the evening without some cause. However, he passed through them, and so to the house. The front room was still empty, and from the position of the chair, which was exactly where he had left it, it seemed as if no one had been there since he left it. Therefore the old man had not yet returned. He looked into the back room; this also was empty. In fact the old lady, who could no longer do without a fire, had that very morning changed her residence for the winter and gone where, whatever may be their faults, they do keep up a good fire, namely, to the House; and was already dressed in the blue and white check which forms the neat and tasty uniform of the place, and had consumed in gin the last twopence of Mr. Carey's florin, and was looking forward with resignation to six or seven months of temperance and regular hours.

Claude went upstairs. Melenda's room was open, but no one was in it. Melenda herself was sitting in Valentine's room, with Lotty, who was asleep.

She ran to meet Claude with some signs of agitation.

'O Claude!' Melenda came out hurriedly, 'I am so glad you are come again. Something dreadful's happened. Hush! I don't want Lotty to hear.'

'What is it?'

'It's Lizzie's father. He's dead.'

'How did he die?'

'I don't know. It was this morning that a policeman came and asked if there was a man lived here named Lane, and we called Liz, and she said yes, and he was her father; and he said, "Then your father's dead," he said, "and you'd better come along o' me," he said; and she went. And I can't leave Lotty, and there's nobody in the house but us two. Oh, dear. I never thought we should miss Valentine so soon.'

Outside the house the people were talking together in knots of two and three. They spoke in low voices, as people talk in the presence of the dead.

Now, while Claude looked about him for some one to ask or to advise him, there strolled leisurely into the street none other than his brother Joe.

'You here, Joe?'

'Why, Colonel,' said Joe, slowly, 'I sez to myself when we knocked off to-day, I sez, "There's Melenda with that sick girl, and the young lady gone, and p'raps they want a bit o' help or advice." So I came down the road in the tram, and here I am.'

'Well, Joe, it strikes me that we shall all want as much advice and help as we can get before very long.'

'I beg your pardon, sir'—one of the women detached herself from the group and accosted Claude; 'you knew the poor old man, sir. I've seen you here with the young lady.'

'Yes, I knew the old man; what has happened?'

'They picked him up in the canal, and they've got him at the Stag's Head in the Canal Road. Lizzie's gone there too, for the inquest.'

Found in the canal! Claude felt sick and dizzy. How did the man get there? and in whose company was he last seen?

'What's the matter, young 'un?' asked Joe, surprised. 'What makes you so white in the gills?'

'Come with me, Joe; I'm afraid we shall find out soon enough.'

In the parlour of the Stag's Head, on the great table dented and battered with a thousand hammerings of pewter pots at friendly leads and the emphasisings of a thousand toasts at lodge meetings—for a lodge of the Ancient Order of Buffaloes met here—and club meetings, there lay a shapeless heap, covered over with a white sheet. A policeman sat in the room, not for fear of those who break in and steal, but out of respect to what was under the sheet. In a far corner—as far as she could get from the table—sat Lizzie, looking scared and frightened.

'Oh,' she cried, 'you've come at last—I knew you'd come. Don't go away, please. There's to be an inquest directly, and I've got to give evidence. Oh, I am so frightened.'

'Don't be afraid, my gal,' said Joe; 'we won't go away till you've done.'

'Father's dead,' she whispered.

'I know,' said Claude. 'But, Lizzie, is there no other place than this for you to wait?'

'There's only the Bar, but it's full of men drinking, and they keep asking questions.'

'How was it?'

'I don't know. They are there—under the sheet. You can look if you like.'

'Who are they?'

'Why, the other—I don't know who he is. They found them together.'

'If you knew the deceased, either of you,' said the policeman, 'you might give evidence. The jury are called for half-past seven.'

He laid back a corner of the sheet and showed the face of the dead man. It was perfectly calm and peaceful; the lips had dropped into a smile; the eyes were closed in what looked like the sleep of a child. The long white hair lay upon the pillow on which they had placed his head, as if reverent hands had disposed it to the best advantage, so as to serve as a frame for the beautiful waxen mask of a face. The poor old scribe had got what he demanded of his enemy; he had got back his life. What more could he desire?

'Oh, isn't father beautiful?' Lizzie whispered. 'He was a gentleman once, before he got into trouble. Don't he look like a gentleman again?'

He looked perfectly peaceful and happy. He looked like one who had spent his life wholly in the contemplation of things saintly and the working of things holy. The dead Bishop lying on his bed could not look more holy. But there was more beneath the sheet.

The policeman rolled back the sheet a little further and discovered a second head. There was, as Lizzie explained, another body found with her father's. It lay upon its side facing the first. The limbs were writhing when they were fixed in death: the face was distorted, wild, and full of horror, with open and staring eyes which still seemed to see something inexpressibly terrible and fearful. The right hand of the first corpse held the coat collar of the second as if dragging an unwilling and conscience-stricken prisoner to justice.

This was Claude's father. A terrible death after a shameful life. The thought that it was his father, whatever the life, whatever the death, touched him with such pity as one might feel for one who was not a disgraceful father. All was finished now, the persecution, and the extortion, and the dread. No more to be feared from him. Only room now for the thought of what he might have been.

'That's just how they were found,' said the Policeman, 'only this one's left hand you see was clutching the other side of the coat collar as well, but the hook tore the collar. No one saw them roll in: no one seems to know how they fell in. Looks like a quarrel, don't it? But they're both oldish men, and the one with the grey hair looks near seventy. Men of seventy don't quarrel and fight, do they? Not as a rule, says you. The young woman here is ready to identify her father, but no one seems to know anything about the other man. Looks respectable, doesn't he? Got new boots, and good boots too, and new clothes. Here's his hat'—too well Claude knew that hat! 'It was picked up on the bank. Oldish man, but he looks as if he'd got a good bit o' life left in him still: wiry kind o' face, isn't it? Didn't like tumbling in, seemingly. Was it one tried to push the other in? Were they in drink? Nothing in their pockets; not a penny; only a scrap of paper in this one's pocket with the name of Lane, Ivy Lane, Hoxton, on it. Not a penny: at least that's what the bargees say who pulled 'em out. 'Tain't likely there would be a penny after they'd had the run of the pockets.' Claude thought of asking whether there had not been found a watch and chain—his own watch and chain, in fact—but he refrained in time. 'Why, man alive,' said the policeman to Joe, 'haven't you ever seen a dead body before?'

In fact, Joe was gazing with open mouth and hanging hands; his cheeks were white, and he seemed unable to tear his eyes from the sight before him. Just so, Claude felt, he must himself have appeared when first his father announced himself in his chambers. In the feeling and beautiful language of our ancestors, Joe 'was confounded, and his jaws stuck.'

'Why, Joe,' said Claude, 'what's the matter? Sit down, man, and don't look at them any longer.' He covered the bodies again with the sheet. 'Nothing at all in this man's pockets. Nothing in his pockets. No letter, or card, or address. Why, perhaps you will not be able to identify him.'

'Perhaps not,' said the policeman. 'As for this one, we know him through his daughter.'

'We know him too,' said Claude. 'We are come to do what we can for his daughter.'

'And as for the other, why, very likely he'll never be identified at all; there's a many bodies that never do. They are country people, for the most part, and they get into bad company and mischief; or they're foreigners perhaps, and it's bad company with them, too; and no one asks after them, and when they don't come

back to their hotels, presently their boxes are opened and sold, and nothing said.'

'Very likely he will never be identified at all,' Claude repeated, slowly and with emphasis, looking at his brother. 'Joe, do you feel better? We both know this girl, who is very respectable, and there will be no difficulty in identifying her father, at any rate.'

Joe retired to the bar, where he had a glass of brandy neat, and tried to pull himself together, but with small success. For he had seen his father again. After all these years, he remembered him instantly—and his father was dead.

As regards his former statement concerning his father's death it had been, of course, fabricated and invented by himself without the least authority. He made that statement for the ease and satisfaction of his mother. When a man of over forty goes into compulsory retirement for a period of five-and-twenty years, which is equivalent to twenty years at least, one may be justified in supposing that he will never come out again; though, from time to time, Joe asked himself what would happen if his father were after all to come out and to find his way to the almshouse, and what his own missus would say, and what Claude and Sam and Melenda, from all of whom the truth had been carefully hidden, would say. Once the fiction was invented, Joe satisfied his conscience, which was not more than reasonably tender, by the assurance that his father could never live to complete his sentence.

He had lived, then, and he had presumably received his ticket of leave, and he was out. How long he had been out, or what he had done since he came out, what friends he had made, who knew his secrets, Joe knew not. His father was out of prison, and he was dead; he was discovered drowned like a rat in a ditch. Suppose the policeman were to ask him if he knew the body. Suppose they were to seize him and put him in the witness-box, what should he say? Why had he come there with Claude?

Presently the jury came and the inquest was held. They were mostly householders who kept small shops in the neighbourhood; they came rather sulkily, but they went through the business conscientiously, and as if they had experience of coroners' inquests, and how they should be conducted.

The court was held in a dingy room—the bar-parlour—after the jury had viewed the bodies. Claude and Joe stood in the doorway and looked on. The witnesses were called; the two boatmen who deposed that they saw a hat lying on the towing-path, and the marks of the trampling of feet, or some kind of

struggle, on the gravel; that they dragged the canal, and almost immediately pulled up the two bodies locked together in a deadly embrace just as they now lay upon the table—one man holding the other as if he were trying to shove him under; that they searched the pockets and found nothing except in one pocket, writing materials with a name and address—both men were very clear and decided upon that point; that they had called the nearest policeman, who also searched the pockets and found nothing. The policeman, in his evidence, did not express surprise on this point. Then they put up Lizzie, who identified her father as one who lived by writing letters for Germans and Poles, especially Polish Jews; he was very poor, she said; and as for the other man, she had never seen him, and her father was one of those who have no friends. It was fortunate, Claude reflected, that Lizzie had not been present at the disturbance on Saturday evening.

He might himself have given evidence. But to what effect? That he was a Barrister and a Fellow of Trinity; that one of the dead men was his own father, a ticket-of-leave man and a notorious evil liver, whom he was himself supporting on certain conditions; that this convict broke one of these conditions on Saturday evening, and forced himself upon a young lady, the daughter of Lady Mildred Eldridge, whom he took for his own daughter; that at sight of the other man, now also lying dead, he broke away and fled, and the other ran after him, and that they were no more seen. This was a strange story to tell in this Bar Parlour before the Hoxton Jurymen. Further inquiry would be demanded, and Valentine herself would have to give evidence, and then there would be a beautiful case for the papers.

Joe, too, might have given evidence. He stood in terror that he should be called upon to do so. His evidence would at least have satisfied the police that one of their worst offenders was gone to another Court of Justice. He listened with open mouth and pale cheeks. When the Coroner charged the Jury, he trembled and shook; when the Verdict was returned, he gave a great gasp of relief.

As for the summing up of the Coroner, nothing could be more simple. These two men, he said, were evidently drowned together. They might have been quarrelling, but there was nothing to prove it; they might have been drinking together, which seemed much more likely, because they had not apparently robbed each other, neither having anything to lose. One of the men—the one identified—was very old and feeble; the other was

well advanced in life. The one identified appeared also to be quiet and respectable. Men of that age do not certainly go out and fight when they are sober; the very unfrequented nature of the place where they were found pointed perhaps to the theory of drink. One slipped, perhaps, and dragged the other in with him; or one was drowned in an attempt to save the other. As for the uncalled-for remark of the bargemen that it looked as if one was trying to shove the other under, that was a conclusion formed without any facts to warrant it, and they might just as well consider that it looked as if one man was trying to pull the other out. The Jury without any delay found a verdict of 'Found drowned;' and to this verdict every man affixed his name and seal.

The case was over. No one now will ever know, except his two sons, when and where James Carey died: and they know no more than that he was drowned.

As they walked away, Joe, who had taken a second glass of brandy after the finding, and yet looked pale and trembled, began to explain things.

'You saw that I was took aback, young 'un, by the sight of them two bodies?' he began.

'Yes, I saw that, Joe. Very much took aback you were.'

'Well, now, don't you tell the mother what I'm going to tell you. Don't you let on to no one, Claude, and I will tell you the truth, and why I was took aback. Which I do not deny it.'

'I will not tell anybody, Joe. Go on.'

Claude perceived from his brother's anxious face as well as from the general situation that Joe's imaginative and creative faculties were about to be called into play, on a larger and more active scale than usual.

'Well, then, it's like this. Father, you know——'

'Who died so many years ago.'

'Yes, him. Who died so many years ago, poor old chap! I don't think, Claude, I ever quite got over the blow of his death; for, says I, though but a youngster at the time, where in the world shall I ever find another father who'll be such a honest and respectable father as him who's been took? But what you never have been told, nor any of the others, is, that father had a brother. That's where it is. Yes, he had a brother—a twin brother—just exactly like himself: same age, same height, same hair, same coloured eyes. So like him that you might have taken them two for each other. People have been known to make that mistake; and once he—the twin brother, I mean—got off, because he got

fifty people to swear he was handing round the plate at chapel at the very time that the burglary was committed—namely, church-time. But, bless you, it was father, not him, that carried round the plate! They wouldn't ha' trusted him with a plate if there was only twopence in it. Besides, he never went to church nor chapel. If they had a trusted him with the plate, he'd a sneaked it, money and all.'

The narrator felt that he was really getting on splendidly.

'Well, Joe?'

'Well—father—you know—father—he was just about as steady and as honest as they make 'em. Once they gave him a silver mug for his honesty, and it was put into the Sunday papers. I remember that very well.'

'Yes, Joe, I think I remember something of it, too.'

'You can't very well, Claude—that is, you can't remember much of it, because it was before you were born. But you go on being proud of your father. You stick as tight as wax to your pride, my boy.'

'I will, Joe—I will. I'll be just as proud of him as if he had never had a twin brother at all.'

'Well, as for that precious twin—that other chap—he was a reg'lar bad 'un. He was so bad that father never let him come into the house where, he said, honesty alone should shake a leg.' Claude laughed, but begged his brother to continue. 'Whatever good there was about father was bad about that other chap. If one was sober, the other drank like a fish; and if one was a steady workman, the other one never did a day's work in his life; if one got silver mugs for good character, the other was always going off to quod for roguery. He was a burglar too, and proud of it. Father got at last not to speak to him—wouldn't own to him—wouldn't help him—wouldn't have nothing to say to him. But it made no difference, whether father argued with him or whether he walloped him it was all the same. A reg'lar confirmed bad 'un, he was.'

'I suppose he got into trouble pretty often, didn't he?'

'He did so, Claude. He got into trouble a heap of times; he was 'most always in trouble, and at last he got a long sentence. I thought he must be dead, Claude, I did indeed. And what struck me all of a heap, sudden-like, when I see that body was to reckonise that it was nothing else in the world but the body of that —very—same—twin brother. There! Now you know why I was took aback. I thought he was dead ever so long ago. And if I'd

had to give evidence I should ha' had to say that he was father's twin-brother—a ticket-of-leave man, Claude'—his voice dropped —'on'y a ticket-o'-leave man.'

'That was very strange, Joe. Hadn't we better keep this story to ourselves? There are always bad hats in every family, and it does no good to talk about them, does it? Besides, considering we've had a father who is such a credit to all of us that we are never tired of talking about him, what does it matter about this uncle—this twin brother?'

'Right, lad, right,' cried Joe, brightening up. 'What does it matter, after all? We won't tell Sam, will we? Nor yet Melenda, nor yet my missus and the young 'uns. There's no need to let 'em know now, and him dead and all, that their father's twin brother was such an out-and-out reg'lar bad 'un.'

Joe's readiness of invention thus extricated him from a great difficulty, and he has ever since congratulated himself upon his resource and the fertility of his imagination, which enabled him so readily to make Claude believe in the existence of the twin brother —the out-an'-outer, and in the exemplary character of his father.

It is the privilege of the parish to bury, at the expense of the ratepayers, such persons as die poor or friendless within their borders. The parish funeral is not a costly matter; the parish undertaker does not generally retire from business with a large fortune; and things are not always ordered at these functions with as much solemnity as the relations might desire. Therefore it was felt to be a kindly act when Claude undertook to provide the funeral expenses for both these poor men. He 'followed' in person, accompanied by Lizzie, who was supported by Melenda. Joe did not appear. Thus, the hawk and the pigeon, the wolf and the lamb, lay down in death, side by side, together.

In such a case as this, the words of the funeral service produce upon the bystanders something of an incongruous effect. Did Mr. James Carey really entertain the sure and certain hope spoken of by the Chaplain at the last moment when his soul came bubbling up to the surface of the dark canal? Did he hear that voice that cried, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord'? Pity that prayers for the dead are not encouraged by the Church; one would have preferred, for such a funeral service, a few words of supplication in the deepest humility on behalf of a sinner most horribly unrepentant, together with a word of thankfulness on behalf of those from whom his death had averted so much misery and disgrace.

Claude gave to each of the girls a wreath. 'Lay yours,' he whispered to Lizzie, 'on the stranger's coffin. Say, "I have forgiven."'

Lizzie did as she was told, thinking it was part of the service.

'Lay yours on Lizzie's father, Melenda,' he whispered her. 'Say, "Forgive the father for the daughter's sake."'

Melenda, too, did as she was told. She knew that there was a mystery, and that it was Valentine's secret. Therefore she made no search into it, and never spoke of it, and no one, now, knows the complete history of James Carey and Mr. Lane except Claude and Valentine, and, as we have seen, even they do not know all the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

COMING OF AGE.

NEVER was there any coming of age which more nearly resembled a funeral. The daughter of Sir Lancelot Eldridge should have attained her majority in her own country house; there should have been joy-bells and treble bob-majors, Venetian masts with streamers and flags, bands of music, bouquets for everybody, dances on the village green, treats for the children, sports and athletics for the young men, a great ball at the house and half the county invited to it, and, to crown the whole, the heartfelt, outspoken rejoicings of an affectionate, grateful, loyal, contented, industrious, respectful, and scrupulously clean tenantry and peasantry. We all know how respectful, loyal, and affectionate are the peasantry and tenantry of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales.

The family Solicitor came, a young gentleman of thirty or so, accompanied by his Junior Partner, who was not quite so young by forty years or so, and carrying a great box of papers. They arrived at about eleven, and were taken into the library. The girls heard their steps, and felt somehow as one feels when the undertaker calls.

Claude was with them, and the conversation languished, because one of the three was anxious, and two were stricken with a sense of guilt. These were the two who had already discovered the secret. When Lady Mildred came to them, she

found the two girls sitting hand in hand, and Valentine with hanging head and burning cheeks.

She looked at them for a moment with troubled eyes; then she held out her hands, and they sprang to their feet, and fell upon her neck, one on each side, and I think that all three were crying—those tears which flow freely and readily from women's eyes and express every emotion, whether of joy, or sorrow, or sympathy.

'My dears,' she said, 'I thought it would be easy to tell you. It used to seem a small thing that I should have some day to say to one of you, 'My dear, you are not my daughter.' But it is not a small thing, children; it is a very hard thing. I have done, I fear, a grievous wrong to one of you, because Beatrice must have her own property; and Polly must have her brother, and you will no longer be equal.'

'Beatrice can give Polly half her fortune,' said Valentine.

'Polly can never take any of the fortune,' said Violet. 'But Claude can still be brother to both of us.'

Valentine made no reply to this proposition. That was because she had known for three months that he was not her brother. This kind of knowledge entirely changes one's views as regards fraternal affection. She knew, by this time, that a Brother cannot be shared. He is one and indivisible, like a strawberry.

'My other daughter,' Lady Mildred went on, looking straight between them, 'forgive me for bringing you up in ignorance. At first when I took you from your mother, I thought chiefly of helping a very poor and heavily burdened woman. I thought little about the child's future. Then, when I placed her beside my own little girl, and saw how pretty she was, and how winning, and how dainty, I thought how it would be to bring both up together, and not to let either know which of the two was the gentlewoman, and how it would be curious to watch them both, and I wondered whether birth would show. My dear children, what has been shown? Why, that there is no difference—not the slightest difference—between you. You have proved that there are, in every condition of life, children who may be trained and educated to have the manners and the instincts of the most well-bred and the most cultured. But I, for one, never doubted. Just so, among ourselves, the well born and the well educated, there are men who are clowns in manners and hogs in taste. Not the slightest difference between my two

girls. Nobody can pretend that there is. Yet, the moment the truth is declared, the world will cry out that they knew it all along, and always said so, and it never had been any secret which of the two was of gentle birth. No one, as yet, has ventured to say that one of you is less gracious, less generous, less well-bred, less a gentlewoman, than the other. There is nothing in the world so good as to be gentle, and one of you, my dears, is as gentle as the other. And your brother Claude, my dear Polly,' she added, still looking between the two, 'is as gentle as yourself. One of you must learn that you do not belong to gentle blood. I trust she will learn it without regret and without false shame. If Beatrice will divide what is in her power to share, and Polly will accept it, I shall be very glad. But if not, one of you is an heiress and the other has nothing. Nothing? Oh, yes, my children, she has our love, the love of Beatrice and myself, and she will always be, in all things, my daughter and her sister; and she has more than Beatrice, because she has a brother of whom she may be justly proud. Patience, Claude! I will give your sister to you in a few minutes!'

Nobody moved—nobody spoke—while Lady Mildred paused to collect herself. Then she continued, still looking between the two girls and holding them each by one hand.

'As for you, Beatrice, you become to-day mistress of your father's house, estates, and fortune; you have a great many acres of land, which used to mean a great many thousands a year, but they do not mean so much now; you have investments which have been accumulating for you; you have houses—this very house is yours—with all that is in it. You have become to-day a person of very great importance; you will be courted wherever you go, for your fortune, and you will be told that it is for your beauty and your cleverness. You will be assailed by all kinds of persons who want money; there will be plenty of people ready to assure you that you have all the virtues. No one can possibly have a more difficult position than an heiress, my dear. I am very sorry for you, and I am sure you will thank me for keeping you so long from knowing the truth. It is a grievous misfortune, my child, for anybody, and especially for any young man or young woman, to be rich. I do not think anyone should be allowed by law to be rich until he is at least fifty years of age, and I doubt whether most people are ready to take upon themselves the burden of wealth, even then. Perhaps sixty is too soon for most.'

'Violet.' She kissed her, and the girl started and turned quite pale, and trembled. 'Let me give you to your brother. Claude, she is your sister. This is little Polly-which-is-Marla. Valentine, let me restore you to your own name. You are henceforth Beatrice, only daughter of Sir Lancelot Eldridge.'

'Oh, no, no!' said Valentine, 'I will never change my name; I shall always be Valentine.'

'Claude,' cried Violet, 'I was perfectly certain of it, always, from the very beginning; I remembered the wet sheets and the clothes-lines; I am sure I did; my own brother! You would rather it had been Valentine—you are disappointed in your sister; I am very sorry, for your sake.'

'Indeed, Violet—indeed I am not disappointed.' He did not say, though it was in his mind, that he was very glad it was not Valentine; nor did he—though that too was in his mind—inform her that her father was lying dead at that moment in the parish mortuary. He kissed her solemnly, and rather awkwardly, on the forehead; it takes time to learn how a sister should be kissed, and, in fact, there are many ways: the simple chaste salute on the brow is much in use as a formal acknowledgment of relationship, especially when people are no longer young; a common way is for the brother to kiss his sister on both cheeks, one after the other, while he holds her head in his two hands. But this is only for quite young people, and when brother and sister do really love each other. A girl's lips must always, of course, be left for her lover. They are sacred.

'Valentine has had you all to herself for three months,' she said, blushing at his embrace; 'you must think of her already as your sister—not of me at all. But it is my turn now, Claude. Let us try to be a good deal to each other; I am selfish, and I hate—oh, how I hate—rough things; I can never go to Hoxton. But the world is not all Hoxton, is it? There are other places and other things; you won't be always pulling people out of the mire and getting into a rage about injustices and workgirls, will you?'

'No, Violet; we will try to be a good deal to each other.' But his eyes wandered from her, and rested upon Valentine.

Then Violet, in her quick way, turned to Valentine, still holding Claude's hand tightly. 'My dear, who should be Beatrice if not you? If it had been me,' she added, with more feeling than grammar, 'I must have abdicated in your favour. As for sharing your fortune——'

'You shall,' said Valentine; 'of that I am fully and absolutely resolved.'

Then Violet turned to Lady Mildred. Her eyes were very bright and her cheeks flushed.

'You have kissed me so often when I was Violet,' she said; 'kiss me now, when I am only Polly—Polly-which-is-Marla. We will go and live together, Claude and I, the children of the gutter; we will live somewhere, but not in Hoxton—not in Hoxton. I will set up my easel and paint. Perhaps I shall be able to sell my pictures, and I shall sign them Marla Monument, or Polly Monument, or Polly-which-is-Marla Monument, whichever Claude likes best. As for the fortune, I would die rather than take any of it. Sometimes you will let me come and see Valentine, won't you? I couldn't live without seeing her sometimes—just to tell her how the Princess likes the rags. We have often talked together about the Princess and the rags.'

'Oh, my dear—my dear!' cried Lady Mildred, distressed. 'You do not understand. You are never to leave me, you are always my daughter—my Violet. Everything is exactly as before, only that I have given you a brother.'

She had also, Claude reflected, given her a large and very interesting family. But no mention was made of them on this occasion.

Then Lady Mildred drew Valentine away, and left the brother and sister alone.

'I must confess to you, my brother,' Violet said, 'I must tell you the whole truth, if you despise me for it. Claude, I have always feared this day. Ever since I learned the story of Polly's parentage, I have had a presentiment. Oh, it was a certainty that I was the Polly, and not Valentine at all. Don't despise me too much, Claude. I was so selfish that I longed for it to be otherwise. I longed to be Beatrice, not for her money, but for her family. Don't hate me more than you can help, Claude. I loathed the thought of going back to these poor working people. When Lady Mildred told me that you were coming, I pictured a workman, and I was crimson with shame. Don't despise me more than you can help, Claude. Then sometimes, when we went about together, I have seemed to hear all the women whispering—you know how kind women can be to each other—and saying, "What right has this common girl among us? Let her go back to her own people." Why, let me confess it all, I have even prayed that I might be Beatrice. And

all the time, Valentine was so unselfish and so ready to meet her —other people—Claude,' she clung to him and looked into his eyes for some sign of forgiveness, 'don't—don't despise me too much.'

'There is no question of despising, my sister.' He should have kissed her again at this point, but he was unused to sisters, and did not know how such a step would have been received. 'I have known the secret for three months, Violet. Do not speak of forgiveness.'

'You have known that Valentine was not your sister? And yet——'

'And yet I have pretended. Finish your confession, if you have anything more to say, and then you will be happier.'

'Well then—when we actually went to see them—when we talked with Joe and with Melenda, oh, and with Sam, it was dreadful. It was more than I could bear. I can never go again to face Melenda and hear her dreadful abuse. You will not ask me to go there again, will you, Claude? I will go to see my mother—sometimes—with Valentine, but not the others—not just yet. Perhaps in a year or two one might be able to see Sam or Joe, one at a time, you know, and for a few minutes. Valentine will take me, perhaps, because she is not afraid of them. But not Melenda.'

'You shall never go, Violet, unless you wish to go. They do not expect you to go. Valentine has a message for you from them. You shall stay here, my sister, and live on in your world of Art and things Beautiful. Only, don't let it become an Enchanted Land. Remember that outside there are always the men and women who work.'

'Mother,' said Valentine, an hour later, when the family Solicitor had put the papers back into the box and gone his way with the Junior Partner, 'mother, I have a confession to make to you.'

'What is it, dear?'

'Only that I knew the secret from the very first day. Claude's mother told me.'

'Why, she is blind!'

'Yes; but she told me about the dimple in her cheek and the mark on the arm which Violet has. But Claude never knew or suspected. That would have spoiled all. It was the thought that I was his sister which made him so ready to work for me, and so thoughtful.'

'It might have been so, Valentine; it was so proposed by me; but, most unfortunately, you see, Claude discovered the secret

about the same time. His brother Joe told him. And Joe seems to have found it out from Violet's resemblance to her father. So, after all, the only one kept in the dark has been Violet.'

'Oh, is it possible? Could Claude know? Yet he always behaved exactly like a brother; and I thought——'

'Yes, dear; you were both acting a deceitful part all the time. Yet it was a very good thing for you that Claude played his part so well, without speaking of yourself, because it secured the services of an honourable and very deserving young man for you. It was unfortunate for him, because he naturally—I am not blaming him for it, mind—it was quite natural that he should fall in love with you.'

'Oh, mother!' Her cheek flushed quick.

'And, of course, considering his birth and relations, even if it were not for this miserable story of his father, which he has told me, and which Violet must never be suffered to learn, he clearly understands that he must never speak to you on the subject.'

Lady Mildred paused, but Valentine made no reply. Her cheeks were crimson and her lip trembling.

'I have talked the matter over with him. Claude is honourable and reasonable, as I expected he would be. My dear, he is a gentleman, though his father is a convict and a ticket-of-leave man and his mother was a washerwoman. Claude is a gentleman. Be quite easy in your mind, my child. He understands the position perfectly.'

'The position?'

Lady Mildred went on slowly as if she was considering every word carefully, and watching her daughter as if she was looking for the effect of her words.

'You need be under no misapprehensions about his behaviour, and I am sure you will meet him half-way, and continue in your old friendly relations, just as when you each thought the other filled with brotherly and sisterly affection. The dreadful disgrace that has befallen him in this monstrous father of his need not make much difference for you.'

'Disgrace? For Claude? What disgrace can attach to him because his father is a Wretch?'

'My dear, the world would consider it a disgrace. To be sure, the world never knows more than half the facts, and never makes allowance. And as regards your future relations with Claude, you will find him quite willing always to be your servant. All his life, since you have accepted his services.'

'My servant? Claude?'

'He is really a *very* loyal and honourable boy. I am proud of my share in him. I have studied him for twelve years now, and have learned to think better of him every day. There is nowhere a young man who has greater command of himself, or, I believe, greater abilities, or is more trustworthy. He has assured me—and you may accept that assurance fully—that neither by word or look will he ever make you feel that he has ventured to love you.'

'Oh, mother, I cannot bear it!'

'That is arranged, then. You like him and you trust him; you have proved him true; you have already accepted his services; you have taken from him his profession and his career—in fact the Future of Distinction which awaited him; you have plunged into work which may very likely fail, and perhaps keep him in obscurity all his life. So that I think you are really bound to be friendly towards him.'

Valentine tried to speak, but she could not. The tears stood in her eyes, and her voice failed her.

'Of course, he has done all this out of pure love for you. It is quite right that you should know this. You, of course, my dear, must look for a very different kind of alliance. Sir Lancelot's daughter may take any place. Your birth, your fortune, and your beauty, my child, entitle you to be ambitious, and I do not doubt that a very good position indeed will be yours. The mere idea of a young man with such connections presuming—but Claude does not presume. He is a very good boy, poor fellow! and it will always be pleasant for you to remember, even when you are married and have other duties, that you possess what very few women have—a truly loyal and faithful servant working for you among the poor; always humble and obscure, for your sake; desiring nothing better, for your sake; contented to have sacrificed himself and everything—all for love of you!'

'Oh, mother!' She fell sobbing at her mother's knees. 'You kill me. You kill me!'

'Why, Valentine—why? Beatrice, my dear, what is it?'

'Because—because—how can you talk of my marrying—any other man?' She whispered the last words, burying her face in her hands.

'Do you mean it seriously, my daughter?' Lady Mildred smiled, unobserved by her child—'do you mean that you can actually love this young man? My dear, remember what you are, and what he is;—the son of a convict, actually the son of a disgraceful felon, a professional thief and rogue, a man who was

convicted and sentenced to twenty-five years' penal servitude for burglary with attempt at murder—and his mother only a washerwoman—his brother a plumber or locksmith, or whatever he calls himself, and his sister a working girl of the very lowest kind; and all their friends, no doubt, such as one may expect. This would be a very pretty family connection for Sir Lancelot Eldridge's daughter, not to speak of myself! Am not I to be considered? Is there to be an absolute ignoring of rank and birth? Are we to have no pride at all in our family? Why, there never was anybody prouder of his family than Sir Lancelot!'

'Claude is—Claude,' Valentine replied; 'what do I care about his family? Besides, they all know me, and I know them, and they love me—and I'—she murmured softly—'oh, I love Claude!'

'Then, my dear,' said Lady Mildred, 'I withdraw my opposition. Make your own choice—marry whom you please. You will have your faithful servant still, whether you marry him or not. But there is one dreadful difficulty in the way.'

'What difficulty?'

'I am afraid it is an insuperable difficulty. Claude will never break that resolution of his—he will never speak to you of love. Oh, my poor child, you will—actually—have—to ask him yourself!'

CHAPTER THE LAST.

VALENTINE SPEAKS.

SHE would have, some time, to speak to her lover, who would never speak to her. This is a thing which a girl does not forget in a hurry. It was not until the end of the year, the very last day in the year, that she did speak, and then she was constrained by a force strong enough to break through her womanly reserve.

They were at Bournemouth, whither, in late October, Valentine brought the dying girl and her friends. A change to Bournemouth would not save her; no change of place and air would save her, any more than a change of climate would save the poor wretch over whom the great car of Juggernath has passed, crushing bones and grinding limbs. All the year round this great car of ours moves slowly onwards, crushing the limbs of hapless women, and pounding and beating them to death. Some of us have eyes to see them writhing beneath the wheels, and each says to each—of those, that is, who do have eyes to see—

that it is not his fault. No; it is nobody's fault, but perhaps some day the working men as well will receive eyes to see their suffering, and ears to hear their cries, and then they will perhaps try to find the remedy which we have failed to find. Not all of them have the good fortune that befell Lotty in being taken out of the noise and the dirt, the privation and the hunger, for just a few weeks, a brief holiday, after her eight years' suffering, of peace and rest. Happy girl! To be lapped in love and plenty, though all her bones were broken and though life was ebbing rapidly away. Happy girl! To forget, before she died, the existence of the sweater and the manufacturer; to feel no more the weight of that Accursed Law of Elevenpence Ha'penny, even though the day was swiftly drawing near when there would be set up, in the green churchyard upon the hillside, among the multitudes of white marble crosses, one more to mark the resting-place of an obscure girl slowly and cruelly done to death. Yet no one's fault. No, it is no one's fault.

When first Lotty came she could be wheeled about a little in a chair; the sun was still warm at midday, the yellow leaves were still on the trees, there were still flowers in the great garden of the town; they could watch the sea, mysterious, wonderful, to girls who had never seen it before, and listen to the plash of the water upon the shore, and breathe the fragrance of the pines. But very soon the sun lost his warmth even at noon, and the days grew short and cold, and Lotty went out no more.

Then she sat in a warm room where Valentine ministered to her and Melenda nursed her day and night, her mind filled with sweet thoughts and gentle hopes, which she had never known before Valentine came to her, so that her death-bed was indeed to her an opening of the Gate of Life. The whole of the dreadful past was clean forgotten; she remembered no more the long and weary days with the never-ending click of needle and thimble, and the slow-creeping hours, the dull pain in her back, the hunger of the time, the sleepless nights, when she longed to moan aloud but would not, for fear of disturbing the girls asleep in the same bed with her. Ivy Lane was far away; it receded farther every day; the girl had never been there; it was a dream; always she had been sitting in this soft chair, and lying on the soft bed, eating grapes, while Valentine read to her or made sweet music for her, or while she gazed through one of those Twelve Gates, which are never shut by day or night, into the Wondrous City. And always

Melenda quiet and subdued, and never in a rage, and Lizzie contented and happy.

There came a day—it was the last day of the year—when the poor child was to feel her pain no more. She was lying with a smile upon her lips, and in her soft and tender eyes as they rested on Valentine or on Melenda lay love unspeakable. They all knew—she knew herself—that she was dying. At the foot of the bed stood Lizzie weeping without restraint, and at the head Melenda dry-eyed, self-contained, sat holding Lotty's white long fingers. She would cry when she could do nothing more, but not till then.

'Dear Lotty,' whispered Valentine, bending over her, 'your troubles are nearly over now.'

Lotty made no reply. Her heavy eyes rolled slowly round till they rested on Melenda.

'There is no more sorrow, dear,' Valentine went on, 'nor any pain left for you. Perhaps you will see us all again soon: Melenda, and Lizzie, and me.'

The dying girl made answer none. In her last moments she was back again, in imagination, among the shirts and button-holes.

'Never mind what they said, Melenda dear,' she murmured, her eyes wandering as if there was something she did not quite understand. 'Them Germans do swear awful and call dreadful names, but never mind what they said: don't get into a rage; what does it matter so long as they give us the work?'

'Lotty, there is no more work: it is all done,' said Valentine, 'all done and put away—and paid for,' she added. 'Oh, it is paid for, with this.'

'The room gets hot, doesn't it, in the afternoon, and the days get longer and longer. Oh, Melenda, it's you who do all the work. It's my back, dear—I must lie down again. Give Lizzie my bread and butter, dear, when she comes in. I don't want any dinner when I'm laying down. Poor Liz, she's always hungry, isn't she? Don't be hard on Liz, Melenda. Think of Tilly.'

Melenda clutched her hands and set her lips; but her eyes were dry.

'When Tilly comes home again, Melenda, we won't be cruel to her and drive her away, will we? Let us take her back again, and pretend we don't know. Oh, Melenda—she was so dreadful poor, and she was always an impatient one. She wasn't brave and strong, like you.'

Valentine stepped back, so that the girl's eyes should fall on no one but her old companion.

'I haven't done much work lately, have I? because I've been so bad. But I feel better now. There's no pain in my back to-day, and I shall soon be quite well. The Doctor said so—and Valentine—who is Valentine? Melenda'—her eyes were full now of a vague yearning as if after something unknown—'Melenda, we've been friends, haven't we?—we've always been friends.'

She closed her eyes and her hands dropped. Melenda kissed her, breaking out into passionate cries and weeping. But Lizzie stopped crying, and laid the limbs straight, and folded the arms across her breast. For Lotty was dead.

. . . . . .

When Claude came in the afternoon, Valentine led him into the room where the Dead girl lay.

'See,' she whispered. 'This is the beautiful face she was meant to have. You can discern it now, though the cheek is so thin. Did you think our poor Lotty could ever have been half so pretty? Her face was smirched and spoiled by our cruelty and neglect and apathy, not by any sins of her own, poor child! Since she ceased to work she has grown daily more beautiful—and now she is dead. As the Doctor said, what better thing could befall her? Oh, Claude, we have been Christians for nearly two thousand years, and we can say still that the best thing for thousands among us is to die.'

'Are we Christians?' he replied. 'Have we, even yet, begun to understand what Christianity means?'

Presently they left the chamber and went out together upon the cliff. It was a still afternoon, with a clear sky and no wind, and in the west there was a glorious winter sunset. When the sun had quite gone down there arose a splendid afterglow, red and rosy, high in the western sky, and reflected in the ocean, full of consolation and of hope; and below their feet the quiet waters lapped upon the shore. Behind them, in the east, there was a blackness in the sky that could be felt.

'Claude,' she whispered, 'we are still in the presence of the Dead. This place is like a church; and—oh, I can speak at last.'

'Speak, Valentine. What is it you would say?'

'My mother tells me you have confessed things—things

about me. And that you said foolish things about your father's sins and your own—inheritance. And that your lips were sealed.'

'They were not foolish things, Valentine; they were real things. How could such as myself ask you to share with me my inheritance of shame?'

'O Claude! Have I not shared it already? Can I ever cease to share it? Forget that foolishness. Besides—you are—yourself. We are not brother and sister; you have known that all along, and so have I. There lies a great garden at our feet, where we can work—if we work together—always together. Claude, have I said enough? Oh, do not ask me to say more.'

He took her hand and kissed it. He bent his head and met her lips and kissed them. But he could not speak for awhile. Presently he found a voice.

'Oh, my Queen!' he murmured. 'Oh, my mistress! Oh, my Lady and my Love!' She raised her head, while the red light in the west filled her eyes and made them wondrous.

'Hand in hand, Claude, all our lives.'

So, almost beside the girl's dead body, these lovers were betrothed.

The afterglow died in the west; the last day of the year was over; the Past was done; but in their hearts there sprang the new light of another day.

THE END.

Woman's Work in Creation.

A REPLY.

DR. B. W. RICHARDSON, in an interesting paper under the above title in the October number of this journal, took up a subject which has often called forth strong expressions of opinion from members of his profession and which seems lately to have rankled in the medical mind in an unusual degree. Dr. Withers Moore, in addressing some few months ago the British Medical Congress, made the over-education of women his theme, and protested in set terms against the modern movement which in his own country is even more advanced than in ours. Sir T. Spencer Wells touched upon the same topic in his opening address at the Sanitary Congress, and pronounced an exactly opposite opinion. Dr. Richardson seems to steer a middle course, for while he allows that women can rival men in nearly every kind of work, intellectual and manual, that they choose to practise, he nevertheless does not approve of any such efforts on their part. He declares that every woman must decide in her own mind, and this presumably in her early girlhood, whether she will be a rival or a helpmeet. If the former, she is forthwith to give up feminine attire, allow herself to grow ugly or, at any rate, grotesque, and so far sacrifice her health as to be incapable of having healthy children. By these means she will develop into a kind of nondescript person, capable of doing any or almost any work she chooses. If, however, she prefers to train herself for the old-fashioned domestic duties, she is to remain beautiful and womanly, clothed in trailing skirts and enjoying tolerable health, but quite innocent of any intellectual effort. It is not at all surprising that Dr. Richardson closes his article with a kind-hearted warning against the first of these alternatives. The uninformed lady, 'hedged about with petticoats and dragging long trains in the mire,' to quote the Doctor's own expressive words, is not an enviable object. But even she is better than the abnormally developed

person of neither sex who is to lose health and beauty in the pursuit of a profession. If Dr. Richardson's premises are true, his conclusion is perfectly correct, and the only wonder is that he has given it in such an apologetic whisper at the end of his story. It is with the object of relieving the minds of the compassionate public, who must be very much distressed at the miserable predicament in which women seem to be placed, that the present reply is written.

Dr. Richardson quotes examples to show that in manual labour and in intellectual work women may succeed at a certain cost to themselves and the world. Let us consider the two kinds of work quite separately. As regards manual labour such as that of whitesmiths, turners, and brass-finishers, it is no modern movement that has offered it to women. Anyone having the most elementary knowledge of the history of English industry can see the fallacy of naming such occupations as hitherto performed by men only. The tendency of our factory legislation for many years past has been in the opposite direction. The strong trade-unions of men have co-operated with philanthropists to shut women out of much work which formerly was undertaken by them. Whether it is right or wrong for women to use their muscles in earning a livelihood, those of the poorer classes have done it for so many generations that we have the results before us. We need not attempt to prophesy the strange evolution that will take place when women work like men, instead of staying at home to nurse their children. We have merely to look about to see what has already taken place under these very conditions. Mrs. Lynn Linton, writing in the *National Review*, falls into precisely the same error, and talks of women working at the pit-brow and in similar industries as if it were something new and of the period. This undeniable fact—namely, that women of the poorer classes have always undertaken hard manual work, and that the effect of modern legislation and public opinion is to lighten and not add to out-of-door occupations—disposes of a large portion of Dr. Richardson's argument as to what peculiar creatures women will become when they are allowed to earn a living by manual work.

One alteration in respect of female artisans has been threatened, and even partly accomplished, by those holding advanced views on these subjects. Women are in some trades paid better than they used to be. There is a chance of cases of tyranny and injustice exercised by capitalists or overseers being inquired into and publicly exposed. Protective unions have

been formed amongst them, and some higher interests than the daily struggle for bread have been introduced into their lives. In some few instances they have been admitted to share the benefits earned by those who are called the aristocracy of the labouring classes. For example, a few weeks ago a conference of delegates from printers' unions resolved that women should be admitted on equal terms to their organisations. These changes will not make women harder worked, but better paid, and it cannot be supposed that, even if they are the mothers of young families, that alteration will hurt them.

Having cleared away the mistake of assuming that manual labour is any new privilege for women, we are left to deal with the intellectual work which they are only now being permitted to undertake, and which Dr. Richardson considers they can succeed in accomplishing if they give up their feminine characteristics and become in fact a third sex. The experience we have of women doctors, women higher-grade teachers, and so forth, is so small, that it seems an absurdity to generalise; but so far as that experience has shown anything, it does not in the least carry out Dr. Richardson's suppositions. There are three main points that he has touched upon. The first, and least important, is dress. He considers that the modern costume of women must be very much altered before they can, as he calls it, 'rival men,' or, as others prefer to describe it, 'earn their living by congenial occupation.' Why should it be more necessary for women to discard petticoats than for barristers to discard wigs? Petticoats are a slight incumbrance if the wearer desires to walk quickly, and are troublesome if she is out of doors in wet weather. Wigs are extremely irksome, and even unhealthy, when worn in a heated court of justice, and during the performance of highly intellectual work. If our judges and counsel are to be forgiven the little weakness of preferring fashion to comfort, the same leniency may be extended to self-supporting women of the educated classes. Let the medical men who feel so acutely the disability of ladies' dress contrast themselves attired for ordinary professional work on a hot June morning with their sisters and daughters starting for college. The doctor is tightly inclosed in black or very dark-coloured cloth, either leaving his chest comparatively exposed or giving it the benefit of double and treble layers of cloth, according to whether he favours the fashion of a shirt front or a buttoned-up frock-coat. A stiff collar surrounds his throat, and a tall black hat, inclosing a column of heated air, is on his head. This painful

uniform of fashion has to be worn during the whole day, although his scientific training insures his knowing that his dark clothing absorbs the heat, and his tight collar, his braces, and his hat interfere with the healthy circulation of his blood. Now consider the pleasant summer costume of what is called the advanced woman. She wears a loose graceful dress of a light shade in colour and of flimsy woollen material. Her straw hat is ventilating throughout and is trimmed with white gauze, so that the sunheat is scarcely felt. Instead of an iron collar stiff with relentless starch, her throat is surrounded with a soft falling lace tucker, and in short her whole costume is exactly suitable to the weather, and because it is suitable it is beautiful. Contrasted with the black cloth, the tall hat, and the barrister's wig, it is the perfection of rational dress. Every unprejudiced person must agree that the medical men should begin with their own sex if they desire reform in dress. In winter it is true men's clothes are less unsightly, but those of sensible women are still not so absurd for winter wear as we have seen men's clothes to be for summer wear. The warm cloth jacket, the gracefully looped skirts, and the comfortable velvet or fur bonnets that ladies wear in winter are very healthy and tolerably convenient. They are certainly no serious hindrance to intellectual work of any kind at present attempted. I deny that women need change their fashions before they can work like men, for already the best of these fashions are much more suitable to work in than the fashions of men; and as men put up with the worse, women can put up with the better. If Dr. Richardson means that women cannot earn their bread in ball dresses, I agree with him. But do men go to business in court dress? Or would a judge carry his robes into the hunting field if he had a mind to follow the hounds?

The second point taken by Dr. Richardson is that personal beauty will be lost to women if they spend their lives in occupations commonly followed by men. With regard to manual occupations affecting the shape of the hands or the complexion we have already spoken. The thing has been tried for centuries. Our factory girls and gleaners and other rough workers have always had their share of the love and reverence of their own class, and they will continue to have it in spite of all scientific prognostications to the contrary. With regard to the new openings for women in intellectual occupations, it seems impossible that these will leave any disagreeable traces in the appearance of those who follow them. There may be an exchange from an expression

of unsatisfied wishes in the face of an untutored girl to that of happy complacency in that of one now well taught what she has a taste for; but I can think of no other probable alteration in appearance. The thousands of female teachers carefully trained for their profession, and now earning comfortable incomes under our school boards, form a class of comely young and middle-aged women, well dressed, and of pleasing, self-possessed manners. Our great singers and actresses, as highly trained and as hard-worked as the members of any profession, have never been noted for any oddity of appearance or for loss of feminine beauty. Dr. Richardson vaguely alludes to some instances in which 'beauty has died on the altar of female independence;' but those who have a very wide acquaintance among the English women, pioneers in the new movement, cannot recall a single instance which accords with his experience. Probably what has misled him is the fact that, whereas in the old days none but beautiful women would have been noticed at all in society, now even the plain have their chance if they are gifted with intellect. Mme. de Staël was not made plain by her literary work, but, being a plain woman, was yet noticed as an authoress. If a lady with red hair, harsh prominent features, and ungainly proportions, is introduced into society as a great lioness, it may be distasteful to the worshippers of a Griselda Grantley. Still, it is extremely illogical to assume that any particular avocation in life is the cause of the unpleasing appearance. It is not at all difficult for any social observer to test Dr. Richardson's accuracy on this point. Attendance at the annual prizegiving at one of the large public schools where nearly all the girls are trained to pass examinations; or at the annual ceremony of giving degrees at the University of London, in Burlington Gardens; or at a tournament of lawn tennis, between two of our ladies' colleges—any of these easy experiments will decide at once whether systematic study has the effect of making young girls no longer beautiful in feature, form, and expression, or graceful in movement and manner.

Dr. Richardson's third point is, the danger for women, and more especially for those who are afterwards to bring up children, of overworking themselves in cramming for examinations. It is possible, without sharing his exclusive admiration for the system of the Scotch Universities, to endorse entirely his wise words as to the danger and folly of cramming. But he is altogether too narrow in defining the class he addresses. Not only women who after their studious years will marry and have children, but all

women, should be mindful of their health, and should guard with jealous care the machine with which they must do their life's work, of whatever kind it may be. There is no need to divide women into two classes of wives and old maids on this account. We do not want a race of ailing mothers in England, nor do we want a race of ailing unmarried women. All the duties likely to be undertaken by women who, from want of inclination or opportunity, do not marry, had best be left alone unless the workers have sound health. Sick nursing in hospitals, teaching in schools, medical practice, business, art — every well-paying occupation demands good strong health; and she who attempts to earn her living after ruining her constitution by injudicious overwork will have but a poor success. Nor should Dr. Richardson have stopped at women. His warnings equally apply to men. To work oneself to the edge of brain disease is a foolish preparation for the hard competition of modern life, and the lesson is as necessary for young men as for young women. Instead of dividing his fellow-creatures into men and women, and subdividing the latter into those intending to lead single lives and those contemplating matrimony, and addressing to the last subdivision only the excellent advice to take care of that most precious possession, health, Dr. Richardson should have laid down the golden rule for the whole of mankind and womankind, with all the force of expression at his command.

Although none will deny that the reasonable precautions to preserve health during the period of school and college life are serious duties to be inculcated by teachers and observed by pupils, yet there are many, and these particularly among members of the medical profession, who consider it far more dangerous to society if women who afterwards become mothers break the laws of health than if others do so. But it will be seen by every ordinary observer of our times that such a selection of life as that suggested by Dr. Richardson is an absolute impossibility. Our English girls do not as a rule have fixed notions of their future, and certainly do not conform to any which may exist in the minds of parents and guardians. The beautiful fiction of the princess sleeping until the prince arrives to awaken her expresses one of the great secrets of the purity and happiness of English homes. Whatever physical or intellectual training is good for those who are to become wives and mothers, that training must be given to all alike, and it must be left to the thousand chances of life how the knowledge acquired by a girl and the character developed in her will be afterwards used. Instead of teaching

young women that they may decide for themselves whether they will marry or not, it is safer and happier to inculcate exactly the opposite. Let them store their minds with knowledge useful under any circumstances. Let them arm themselves with sensible, carefully formed opinions, and habits of self-reliance and self-control, and then, if they are blessed with a good constitution, they may earn an honest livelihood either as the heads of their husbands' households or as independent workers. Every sensible girl knows well enough that she cannot decide beforehand which position in life she will fill. What she can decide is that whatever work comes to her she will be prepared to do well.

If all cultured women are to receive the same kind of education, it becomes a very serious responsibility for any who believe they have influence to consider whether they are doing good or harm by encouraging close study and, in cases where girls desire it, a professional training. On the one hand we find a good deal of medical testimony against such study and training. A formidable band of eminent men, headed by Mr. Herbert Spencer, tells us that women, in order to do their natural work in the best possible manner, should only study with a view of being pleasing in society. On the other hand, we have the experience of many able women who have brought up girls and watched them in after life, and we have also the conclusions which our own reasoning powers enable us to draw from undoubted facts. Medical men, and, indeed, all who have devoted their best energies to the investigations of natural science, are almost entirely incapacitated for the correct solution of social problems. They have acquired a habit of studying objects through the microscope, or deadened by anæsthetics, or under the strict control and discipline of a hospital ward. To them men are as chess pawns, to be moved here or left there, as science dictates. The friction introduced by the constant exercise of free will is forgotten, and thus their calculations as to human action are never realised. This is no doubt the reason why science, with all its modern progress, has affected so slightly the legislation of our country. Medical men are not politicians. They seldom take an active part in political contests, and are not found in high political places. They are satisfied to be indirectly represented in the legislature, and have so little influence upon its action that laws are passed, like those promoted by the anti-vivisectionists, actually hurtful to their most valuable investigations. If the doctors cannot solve their own social problems, and guide skilfully their own political

course, it is not to be expected that they can do so any better for women. They regard all human beings as passive patients, who are to have their failings examined, diagnosed, and prescribed for. They forget that unruly patients will refuse the prescription.

Let us grant for the sake of argument that England would be a greater nation and the English a happier people if all Englishwomen devoted their best energies to purely domestic concerns—if young girls learned as their sole technical acquirements the art of taking care of their own bodily health and that of their children; if all undue excitement were banished, and no risks were run of injuring in the slightest degree the physical strength of the next generation. How should we set about accomplishing this state of things? By denying to women higher education and the choice of professional work? Should we make our girls quiet in mind and healthy in body by leaving them untaught or by teaching them only the accomplishments supposed to be pleasing in society? Experience tells us that a good disposition and a contented mind are the essentials for a quiet life. Restless girls find an outlet in balls, private theatricals, fox-hunting, aimless imitation of young men, mischievous bohemianism, and in plenty of other ways, tedious to enumerate. Compared with the loss of health, temper, and personal dignity involved in the hare-brained race for such excitements as these, even a competitive examination after insufficient preparation is a harmless venture. The miserable condition of women who suffer from what they call 'nerves,' and which shows itself in fretfulness, depression of spirits, hysteria, and other specially ladylike maladies, is generally the consequence of mistaken management of health during the risky period for a few years after leaving school. Some girls, having no aim in life, sacrifice their health by the painful performance of trivial duties of no importance in themselves, and which would never be insisted upon if there were any serious work to do. Others fall ill from sheer ignorance of the most elementary laws of health. Others, seeing no chance of happiness but in a good marriage, risk everything to outshine their rivals in society. Others, from dullness and the carelessness bred of idleness, waste their strength in follies which they know are hurtful. Are any of these dangers incident to the newly discovered openings for women's work? Are any of them the probable condition of girls in careful training for professional careers? To those who have watched the upbringing of girls, it seems rather a preventive than a cause of delicacy of health to give them rational employment. For these reasons, it may be

doubted whether medical men have hit upon the right cure for the evil of over-excitement and over-fatigue among women. Granting all that their physiological propositions establish, it is probable that their want of political skill may entirely prevent them from solving what is after all nothing but a social problem.

It should be remembered that the women who are sure to come within the doctor's purview are those who are ill. There are plenty of strong healthy girls, middle-aged women, and women considerably above middle age, who are fighting the battle of life without any injury to their constitutions, some of them remaining unmarried and some of them bringing up, wisely and well, healthy, happy children. But such women as these do not consult physicians. They have no occasion to. It is the unfortunate few who have been handicapped from the beginning with a bad constitution, some inherited weakness perhaps, or who have unwisely overstrained themselves, that come under the observation of the doctors. Now there is one cause of this occasional overstrain that might well be guarded against, and in this way the small number of women who break down from over-education might be made even less than it is.

The new openings for women are still little known among middle-class parents. A man with a large family to provide for invests money in teaching his boys money-getting pursuits, but leaves his daughters without technical knowledge. The consequence is that nearly all the girls, whose independence and originality of character prompt them to learn some congenial occupation, have to pay by interim work the cost of their own training. Unless they are of age, with money of their own, they have to teach, or write, or act as lady companion, or in some way keep the pot boiling while they acquire and pay for the training which is to fit them ultimately for better work. It is only because serious-minded women have some great advantages over the generality of male students that this double strain of simultaneous earning and learning has not kept them far behind in the race. Women who are voluntary students in any art or profession have undoubtedly some great advantages over average male students. They have not been pressed into the work by conventional prejudice or family tradition. They have not the expensive and health-destroying habits learned by university men at college wines and in smoking saloons. They regard their work as a great privilege instead of a heavy task. In fact, they are necessarily in the state of mind of an enthusiastic lover of his profession. Any scholarships enabling women to carry on their students' work without

the care of breadwinning at the same time will lessen the real causes of loss of health. The same good effect will be produced by enlightening the public, and gradually bringing home the truth to the somewhat darkened minds of parents. With the census returns before us we may see at once that a large number of Englishwomen must either remain unmarried and earn their own livings, or else emigrate to the New World. This fact must be recognised in its full significance before we can usefully reason about the wisest way of bringing up girls. Unless parents are prepared to send their girls abroad, they must furnish them with a good technical education such as will enable them to live independently. To count upon a girl being provided for by marriage, and to teach her nothing but the duties of a married woman, is about as foolish as it would be to count upon a boy becoming heir to a fortune and to teach him nothing but the duties of a landed gentleman. It is at least a comfort to know that, although all women without private fortunes must learn to earn their living, and a good proportion of them must actually use their knowledge and work, yet there is no occasion for the existence of the third sex, nor even for the startling change of the costume of women described by Dr. Richardson. We shall do well to take his warnings against overwork in good earnest and share them with our brothers. As to his prophecies of the Coming Race, they are more amusing than alarming.

ELIZA ORME.

Edged Tools.

A TALE IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

MONSIEUR BLITZINI'S FIRST PERFORMANCE.

THE season was at its height at the little town of Witherington, on the south coast of England; and the presence there of three German bands and of a troupe of Tyrolese zither-players might be taken as evidence that the season at Witherington was unusually brilliant. At the Pavilion on the Pier—and what self-respecting seaside resort is now without its Pier and Pavilion?—companies of strolling performers followed one another in rapid succession, and with equal success. A wandering Variety Show had lingered for nearly a week, so attractive had been the latest war-song which the Only Macfarlane had bellowed lustily in response to three encores at every performance. The celebrated Campbell Comedy Company had given a round of the Legitimate Drama—an elastic term as Mr. Campbell understood it, for it allowed Miss Dora Dartmore (Mrs. Campbell) to appear as the heroines of the 'Lady of Lyons,' 'East Lynne,' 'A Happy Pair,' and 'The Little Detective.' After a week of the Legitimate Drama the celebrated Campbell Comedy Company had departed, and the small boys of Witherington had torn down the vast pictorial posters in which Mr. Campbell was represented as shaking hands with David Garrick, while Shakespeare hovered above them, distributing an impartial blessing. Now a new advertisement was to be read by those who were willing to pause before the hoardings scattered here and there throughout the town. This advertisement was peculiar enough to deserve reproduction here in full:

PAVILION HALL.

SÉANCE PRESTIGISPIRITISTE.

BY

MONSIEUR BLITZINI.

This world-renowned *artiste* will visit Witherington and perform at the Pavilion Hall at 8 P.M. on the evenings of Friday and Saturday, August 13 and 14, 1886.

IMPORTANT TO THOSE INTERESTED IN THE OCCULT!

NO MAHATMAS OR ESOTERIC BAMBOOZLING!!

READ A PLAIN TALE.

Monsieur Blitzini, far-famed as a professor of the so-called Art of Magic, undertook, in the exercise of his calling, to expose the tricks and fallacies of the Spiritualists (including the Davenport Cabinet, the Light and Dark Séance, Materialisation, &c. &c.) This he did with ease; but in the course of the experiments suggested by his researches, he, strange to relate, made the singular and startling discovery that there is, in very truth, a Sphere of Spirits or Genii with whom it is possible for the duly initiated to enter into converse; and, pushing his investigations still further, he became possessed of the extraordinary and wondrous powers which he will have the honour of exhibiting.

Monsieur Blitzini used to perform his Marvels of Magic by sleight of hand alone, the aid of profuse machinery being in his opinion contemptible. Still stranger wonders he now performs without any aid save that of the invisibles above alluded to.

COME AND SEE.

At the end of the performance Monsieur Blitzini will be happy to give a detailed account of his experiences and discoveries to any intelligent member of the audience desiring the same.

MONSIEUR BLITZINI,

PRESTIGISPIRITISTE,

PAVILION HALL, WITHERINGTON, AUGUST 13 & 14, AT EIGHT PRECISELY.

One of these alluring advertisements was affixed to the wall of the Pier Pavilion, but it did not attract as much attention during the afternoon preceding Monsieur Blitzini's promised first performance as it deserved, for a band was playing in the middle of the Pavilion, and at the end of the Pier the noted Man Otter and his seven sons and daughters were giving their astonishing Aquatic Entertainment.

Monsieur Blitzini's advertisement had, however, considerable interest for two men lounging along the pier—two men whom a boy would have called elderly, and whom an old man would have declared young. They were Steele Wyoming, an American, and Cecil Cameron, an Englishman. They paused before the placard and read it silently and with profound absorption. A smile or two flitted across the Englishman's face during the perusal, but the humorous gloom of the American deepened.

'Cecil,' said the latter solemnly, 'this is tall talk, but I like it.'

'Steele,' replied his friend, 'I think it is more fun than a barrel of monkeys.'

'It is very strange,' Wyoming remarked, with the air of a person making a serious confidence to himself, 'how well he can talk American. Much better than I do, in fact.'

'I had the advantage of studying it as a foreign language,' Cameron retorted with equal gravity.

'Perhaps that may be the true explanation,' said the American. 'Now what about this hanky man?'

'I think he's just lovely,' interrupted the Englishman. 'The Esoteric touch is good, and so is the "so-called Art of Magic."'

'The contempt for "the use of profuse machinery" is quite Machiavellian. Altogether he seems to have got hold of an idea both new and good. We've had over and over again the converted and unconverted and re-re-re-converted Spiritualist, but to happen on a new kind of spirits while you were engaged in exposing the bogus one is a good act.'

'It's not half bad,' Cameron added, 'and I'm really grateful to him for saying nothing about that detestable rubbish Thought-Reading. It would have been so easy for him to ring in the old Second-Sight business and to call it Thought-Reading by Spirits of the nth Sphere.'

'Blitzini has a soul above that.'

'We're going to see him?' asked Cameron.

Wyoming stared at him silently for a few seconds, and then

said, 'Why persist in asking foolish questions? As if any two members of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood could be anywhere and see an ad. of a fakir's show and keep away.'

'That's so,' said the Englishman, as they walked away.

Before they reached the end of the pier Cameron paused suddenly, and grasped his companion's arm and said, 'I've an idea!'

'Then I would suggest that you freeze to it,' remarked Wyoming, pleasantly.

'Sir,' replied Cameron, 'to speak your benighted tongue—I have no use for you. Yet I will relent and tell you my idea.'

'Fire away!'

'I will be brief. This Blitzini used to be a conjurer, but now he pretends that he is a conjurer no more, as the newly discovered spirits work all his tricks for him. This, naturally, is all jimmy, and he does his little deceptions just like any other conjurer, of course.'

'Of course,' Wyoming said, as Cameron drew breath.

'Now this is my idea. Suppose that there are really spirits of the nth sphere, and suppose that they are of a sensitive nature and do not like to be spoken of lightly——'

'The Huffy Spook,' commented Wyoming gravely, 'isn't a bad notion.'

'Spook, for all it is German, is a blessed word,' said Cameron; 'it is so much more expressive than ghost or spectre. But you do not yet catch on. Just imagine those spirits reading this advertisement and seeing themselves billed to perform out of their proper sphere. It seems to me that this placard is calculated to hold them up to ridicule and contempt among the spirits of other spheres.'

'I see,' Wyoming interrupted, 'and I think they would be justified in getting mad.'

'And wouldn't they be likely to go for that magician,' asked Cameron, 'and have some fun with him?'

'It would be a cold day for the unlucky fakir,' assented Wyoming.

'I don't like to think what might happen,' the Englishman continued.

The American smiled solemnly and said, 'Well, with a bewildered and baffled conjurer and a lot of angry spooks lying around loose with their dander up, almost anything might happen. And, if anything should happen, why, as Artemus Ward says, it would be money in that man's pocket if he had never been born.'

'Fancy, now,' said Cameron, 'what if this should occur to-night. He is to give his show for two evenings only. Do you know what to-day is?'

'Friday.'

'Hangman's day, you know,' Cameron continued eagerly, 'and it's the thirteenth of the month.'

'That's a curiously unlucky combination, isn't it?' the American asked. 'I've had a baker's dozen of misfortunes happen to me on a Friday when it was a thirteenth. I guess we had better go to-night—perhaps something will happen.'

'Meanwhile,' said the Englishman, as they walked from the Pier upon the Esplanade, 'we must dine. I want a square meal to give me strength to see the show. It's hot and dusty, so let's take a fly to the hotel—let's be hauled mealers, as you Americans say.'

'It is wonderful,' Wyoming remarked, as he beckoned to a cabman, 'quite wonderful how well he speaks American.'

'I learnt it,' replied Cameron, with amazing effrontery, 'from Henry James's novels.'

After their dinner the two friends lighted their cigarettes and strolled slowly along the Esplanade to the Pier. When they reached the Pavilion they found a stream of spectators trickling into the hall where Monsieur Blitzini was to perform. At the suggestion of the American they tossed half-a-crown to see who should pay for the tickets. Wyoming lost, and he selected seats in the front row.

The hall was about half full when they entered it, and a few betarded stragglers came in while the pianist was playing the overture.

'I know this hall very well,' said Cameron, as they sat down; 'I acted here last year in private theatricals. It has one disadvantage, there is no stage-door. We had to come in at the main entrance just as we did to-night, and walk through the auditorium to that door over there on the right, which leads to the stage and to the two dressing-rooms alongside of it. We gave a comic opera, and we were very cramped for space.'

'I guess there will be room enough for the spooks to put in their fine work,' Wyoming answered, intensifying his Americanisms as he was wont to do for the benefit of his English friend.

'Guess, spook, fine work. I'll get 'em all three all ready,' said Cameron, quoting Sir Andrew Aguecheek. 'Yours is a great language, though, as I remarked before, you do draw on the German.'

'I wonder what may be Monsieur Blitzini's native tongue?' asked Wyoming.

'*Monsieur* is French,' answered Cameron, '*Blitz* is German, and *ini* is Italian——'

'Then he is either an Irishman or a Russian,' the American declared with an air of profound wisdom.

'His programme is in French,' Cameron remarked as he bought one from the attendant; 'at least it is in what purports to be French.'

'It's a little short, isn't it?' the American queried; 'seven tricks in the first part and six in the second.'

'Total, thirteen again!' cried the Englishman.

At this moment the musician left off playing, and the curtain rose revealing a stage almost bare. There was an ordinary drawing-room table in the centre, and at the sides there were two smaller tables with glass tops; at the back there was a tall cone, like an extinguisher, except that it was quite seven feet high. Three or four of the footlights in the middle had been removed, and an inclined plane led from the stage about half-way down the centre of the hall. It was next to this 'run-down,' as it is technically called, that Cameron and Wyoming had taken their seats.

A few seconds after the curtain rose, Monsieur Blitzini appeared at the right of the stage, and advancing to the centre he bowed to the audience. He was a man of less than forty. He was tall and slight, with a little stoop of the head. He had thick dark hair, already grizzled. He had a youngish face, but it was heavily wrinkled. Heavy eyebrows arched over eyes which were his chief personal peculiarity; they were grey with a streak of red in the iris. His hands were fine and delicate, but there was a feline suggestion in their movements. The ease of his manner was not artificial, but it might fairly be called excessive.

'Ladies and gentlemen,' he said, as he surveyed the audience calmly, 'I hope to have the pleasure this evening of entertaining you with the sight of strange wonders. What I shall perform before you is so unlike the ordinary performance of the ordinary conjurer that without seeming boastful it would be impossible for me to expatiate on the extraordinary novelty of my programme, were it not that I cannot claim for myself any credit for the marvels which will be accomplished this evening. All that I have done is to discover the Spirits of the Silent Sphere and to induce them to lend us their aid for the working of many wonders. If, therefore, what you may see here to-night pleases you, it is these

Spirits whom you must thank, not me. I am only a humble instrument in their hands, and they are the real authors of all the startling novelties which I hope to be able to exhibit before you this evening. I have to beg that you will bear this in mind. I use neither apparatus nor sleight-of-hand, nor do I rely in any way on my own dexterity or ingenuity. All that I do is to serve as the medium whereby these Spirits work wonders, closely akin to those which the Egyptian magicians wrought before Pharaoh—perhaps by the same means.'

As Monsieur Blitzini finished this very irregular speech, almost exactly the opposite of that ordinarily spoken by the professional conjurer, Cameron and Wyoming looked at each other in blank surprise.

'This is pretty steep, isn't it?' asked the American.

'It is that,' the Englishman answered; 'and I think it is about the coolest thing I ever heard. Just look over the programme, and you can recognise every trick on it, in spite of the fancy French names.'

'*Le Bouquet d'Iris*,' said Wyoming, 'that's the growth of flowers, I suppose, and *La Pluie de Danaë* is the shower of money, of course. But what is *Le Tireur des Cartes*?'

'It's bad French for the rising cards, I'll be bound,' Cameron answered. 'And the others are all as familiar as these.'

'You think, then, that he is hiding the old-fashioned tricks under newfangled names, and that he is merely an ordinary conjurer, who has chosen to give variety to his show by alleging that familiar spirits come from the vasty deep to do his bidding?'

'Precisely so.'

'It's a dodge worthy of Barnum at his best or Sarah Bernhardt,' said the American, enthusiastically.

While the two friends were exchanging impressions Monsieur Blitzini had retired up the stage, as though to see that everything was in order. From the centre table he had taken up his wand. With this in his right hand he advanced again to the footlights.

'I beg you will pardon this delay of a moment only, but you must observe that I have dispensed with an assistant, and that I shall not leave the stage during the performance. I shall remain before you the whole evening, except during the brief intermission between the two parts of the entertainment, and I shall have no assistance whatever—save the unseen hands of the Silent Spirits.'

As he paused for a moment, Cameron said to Wyoming:

'He has a curious accent, hasn't he? It might be foreign—Dutch or Russian—and it might be English.'

'He's not an American,' replied Wyoming; 'I feel sure of that.'

'I shall have the pleasure of beginning my entertainment,' Monsieur Blitzini continued, 'with the strange marvel which I have called *Les Fleurs d'Iris*. I have here a flowerpot filled with garden mould, and I take six seeds from this package, and——' Here he interrupted himself and glanced with apparent surprise at the right lappel of his coat. 'I beg your pardon, but I see I have presented myself before you without the flower which ought to adorn my buttonhole. Now, I agree with a friend of mine who said he would rather wear a flower without a dress-coat than a dress-coat without a flower. Fortunately the omission is easily rectified. I take one of these seeds and I place it in my buttonhole; I beg that the attendant spirits shall cause it to grow at once into a flower; I raise my wand in the air; I apply it to the buttonhole; and you see——'

Monsieur Blitzini suited the action to the word, and the spectators did see. The seed in the buttonhole grew at once to a large sunflower which spread over the lappel of his coat. Then suddenly its outer circle began to revolve and to crackle, while from the centre there shot out, with a sharp report, a long jet of flame. The sunflower had changed to a small Catherine wheel, which spun round, banging, and blazing, and whizzing, and crackling until it had spent its short-lived fury. Monsieur Blitzini stood motionless in the centre of the stage, not lifting a finger to save his beard, which was getting singed, as the King of Spain's was by Drake. A look of surprise came into his grey eyes, and their red pupils glowed above the more material fireworks. At last the spinning wheel of fire gave a final blaze and a sudden bang, and died out and disappeared.

'I say,' said Cameron, 'this is something like a trick.'

'As you justly observe,' Wyoming returned, 'it grows interesting. Who would have thought that the old flower trick had so much flame in it?'

'A man must know his Shakespeare to talk with you,' Cameron answered.

'You see I'm an American,' Wyoming replied, 'and it is meat and drink to us to quote Shakespeare, even when we see a conjurer bound upon a wheel of fire, like King Lear. Did you notice that Blitzini seems quite as much surprised as we are?'

'He bears the ordeal by fire very bravely,' Cameron assented, 'but I confess that I don't exactly understand this.'

Meanwhile the spectators had been tumultuous in their applause of this truly brilliant trick. Monsieur Blitzini stood silent in the centre of the stage, bowing his acknowledgments, without a trace of the flower or of the fire which had followed it in the lappel of his coat. His black doeskin coat was immaculate. There was a flickering smile on his lips, and it seemed as though it was only by a strong effort that he was able to keep the wand in his hand from trembling. As the applause died away he roused himself, and, taking up the flowerpot, he descended the run-down and stood among the audience. Here he finished the trick in more conventional fashion. He borrowed a hat and held it over the flowerpot, and asked a lady to place her hands on the hat, and then removed the hat to reveal a beautiful bouquet of hothouse flowers standing upright in the earth of the pot. He presented the bouquet to the lady gracefully, and then returned to the stage to bow again.

It was with a lighter heart, evidently, that he began the second trick on the programme, where it figured as *La Montre Indestructible.* Under this title Monsieur Blitzini began to perform the familiar feat with a borrowed watch, which is first proved to be a repeater with the eccentric faculty of striking any hour that the owner may choose, and is then smashed to fragments in a mighty mortar. In the beginning of this trick, while the performer was among the audience, all went well; but at the end, when he returned to the stage and wrapped the shattered fragments in a sheet of paper, this sheet of paper suddenly disappeared, and the wheels and springs fell scattered on the stage. Wyoming noticed a curious and enigmatic expression in the conjurer's face as he stooped to gather up the broken bits. Monsieur Blitzini took another sheet of paper; and again it vanished from his fingers and again the fragments of the watch fell on the stage. Collecting them once more and taking a third sheet of paper, Monsieur Blitzini stepped out upon the run-down, and this time he was successful in making a parcel. He gave this parcel to the owner of the watch and asked him to open it, whereupon the timepiece was found intact.

'I shall now have the honour of showing you,' said Monsieur Blitzini, as he again took up his position in the centre of the stage, 'if the assistance I count upon from the Spirits of the Silent Sphere is vouchsafed to me, the wondrous experiment which I have called *L'Ecole de Cuisine tenue par Belialides.*'

'His French accent is good,' Cameron remarked.

'But he isn't easy in his mind,' answered Wyoming, who kept his eyes fixed on the face of the magician.

'I shall now,' continued Monsieur Blitzini, 'venture to tax your good-nature again by requesting the loan of a hat.' As he came down from the stage his eye caught that of Wyoming, to whose questioning look he returned a glance of reassurance. Cameron and his friend had seen already that the performer had recognised them as experts in the art; and they were conscious that, as is the custom of conjurers, he was playing at them. Wyoming held up his hat, and the magician smilingly took it from him and returned to the stage.

L'Ecole de Cuisine tenue par Belialides was soon seen to be a variation on the familiar trick of the omelette cooked in the hat over the flame of a candle—the trick over which Robert-Houdin, in his 'prentice days, burnt his fingers and the borrowed hat. Monsieur Blitzini broke an egg into Wyoming's hat, whereat the young ladies in the audience giggled convulsively. He added butter and salt and pepper, and he stirred these together furiously with a long-handled spoon—such as a man should have when he sups with the devil. Then he held the hat over a candle, and a sudden smoke arose, and a fragrant odour was wafted across the footlights. It was clearly evident that the trick had been accomplished. Monsieur Blitzini laid the hat on the stage just in front of the run-down, and was about to put his hand into it to withdraw the omelette, chatting pleasantly the while and making many small jokes about his own culinary facilities, when he happened to cast his eyes into the hat. Instantly he withdrew his hand, and started back in undisguised astonishment commingled with terror. The head of a large snake protruded from the hat, and extended itself threateningly. With a sinuous movement it thrust itself forward from the hat and started toward the spectators. It was a huge boa-constrictor, apparently, and in girth it was almost equal to the hat from which it was proceeding. The magician stood stock-still on one side, staring at the serpent as though fascinated; only a tremor in his knees betrayed his fear. The head of the great snake crossed the two yards or more of the space between the hat and the footlights, and still the body continued to emerge from the hat. At last it arrived at the run-down, and with a slight effort it raised itself and started to cross this little bridge to reach the audience. There was a sudden movement of alarm among the spectators, most of whom thought that the appearance

of the serpent was part of the trick, and were yet frightened by the fearful reality; but this alarm was allayed when the head of the snake, as it entered on the run-down and passed the line of the footlights, suddenly vanished. The tortuous body could be seen still rising from the hat and pressing forward only to become invisible as it left the stage. It was some seconds after the head had disappeared before the tail of the snake left the hat, but soon it followed the headless body, which continued to move toward the spectators and which was steadily disappearing as it left the stage. The tail advanced nearer the line of the footlights until only a yard of the snake's length was to be seen; then only half a yard was visible; at last the final few inches, thin and tapering, passed across the diminishing distance, until, w ith a sinister vibration, the tip of the tail waved itself upon the run-down and into invisible space.

Cameron and Wyoming looked at each other for a moment, and then turned again to watch Monsieur Blitzini, from whom they had hardly taken their eyes during the brief minute of the huge serpent's existence. They saw him give one gasp before he recovered himself sufficiently to take the abundant applause which followed an effect as novel and as surprising and as inexplicable as this. He snatched up the hat from the floor, and rushed upon the run-down. Then he paused and drew a long breath. In a moment he had turned out upon a plate, with which he had previously provided one of the spectators, the smoking omelette of which the appetising odours had been perceived before the appearing of the snake, and he had returned the hat unimpaired to Wyoming.

'He works neatly,' said Cameron.

'But he is powerful scared,' Wyoming answered. 'These new variations on the old tricks surprise him as much as they do us.'

'Perhaps our joke is coming true—the spirits have taken umbrage at his unauthorised use of their names, and they are playing tricks on him.'

'Do you think that his familiar spook has gone back on him?' asked Wyoming.

'What else can I think?' returned Cameron. 'The Huffy Spook theory is the only tenable one.'

'It will serve as a working hypothesis at least,' Wyoming assented. 'But why is it that all goes well while he is down here among the audience, and that everything goes wrong when he is up there on the stage? Have you noticed it?'

'Yes,' Cameron answered, 'I see it, and it is queer.'

Of the next two items on the programme there is no need to speak in detail. The tricks were commonplace enough in themselves, but they proved to be quite uncommon in their execution. There was nothing as surprising or as startling as the serpent which rose from the hat and disappeared by inches with a sharp line as though it had been cut off with a knife, but they were astonishing enough.

Wyoming kept close watch of the magician's face, and he noted all his movements; and he saw that Monsieur Blitzini, in so far as possible, kept among the spectators, and away from the stage. He was confirmed in his idea that it was only on the further side of the footlights that the indignant spirits were able to take advantage of the conjurer's weakness. Monsieur Blitzini had full control of his resources so long as he was in the midst of the audience, and both tricks went well enough until the exigencies of the performance forced the magician to return to the stage.

And so it was with the sixth trick on the programme, which was called *Le Tireur des Cartes*, but which Wyoming and Cameron soon recognised as the familiar illusion known as the Rising Cards, and justly popular among all modern magicians, as it is almost the only card-trick which is showy enough for a large hall.

Monsieur Blitzini took a pack of cards in his hand, came down among the audience, and performed a series of most ingenious sleights. He passed cards into a man's pocket, and he drew cards from a lady's fan. He gave one spectator a black card to hold, and then touched it with his wand, and, lo! it was a red card. He bade another spectator think of a card, and he then asked him if he would prefer to find it at the top or the bottom of the pack, and when the spectator chose the top, he turned over the uppermost card and it was the one thought of. At last he asked six different persons in different parts of the hall to draw cards and return them to the pack, which, when this had been done, was thoroughly shuffled.

Monsieur Blitzini went back to the stage and placed the pack in a glass goblet, and with this in his hand he advanced toward the footlights. Turning to the spectator who had drawn the first of the six cards, he said, 'Will you, please, ask your card to rise from the pack?'

Before the spectator could make this request, a card jumped from the pack, flew to the side of the stage, and fixed itself to the scene.

Monsieur Blitzini's voice quavered as he asked, 'Is that your card, sir?'

'No,' was the uncompromising answer.

A second card rose from the pack, skimmed through the air, and fastened itself on the scene on the other side of the stage.

'Is that your card?' asked Monsieur Blitzini, doubtfully.

'No,' answered the spectator again.

A third card, a fourth, and a fifth rose from the pack in rapid succession, danced about the stage, and affixed themselves here and there on the scenery. They were followed by a dozen more, which rose in a bunch, flew separately through the air, and attached themselves to every salient object on the stage.

'Do you see your card, sir?' Monsieur Blitzini inquired again with an obvious uneasiness in his tone.

And again the spectator answered—

'No.'

Monsieur Blitzini had come near the footlights to ask this last question, and he now stepped out upon the run-down with the glass containing the remaining cards in his right hand.

'What was your card?' he asked with a disheartened smile.

'The king of diamonds,' the spectator replied; and as he spoke the king of diamonds rose from the pack and bowed gracefully.

The spell of ill luck was broken, and the five other cards rose in turn from the pack. Monsieur Blitzini was again able to bow acknowledgments to the round of applause which always greets this favourite feat when it is properly performed. Wyoming, who was a close observer—he was an excellent poker-player—noticed that, although the magician's lips smiled, his eyes did not.

The final number of the first part of the programme purported to be *La Pluie de Danaë*, which Wyoming and Cameron had guessed to be a fantastic title for the familiar and effective trick generally known as the Shower of Money. In this surmise they were right. With admirable dexterity Monsieur Blitzini seemed to catch sovereigns out of the circumambient air; he found them in the bonnets of the ladies and in the beards of the men; he discovered them here, there, and everywhere; he borrowed a hat, and he threw into it enough gold apparently to suffice to fill it to the brim. He gave a pretty touch to the trick by making an ever-increasing arc of gold pieces stretch from one hand to the other, and then from one hand into the hat—'like a bar-tender mixing drinks and pouring a cocktail from a glass in his right hand to a glass in his left,' as Wyoming described it.

While performing this ingenious variation on an old trick,

Monsieur Blitzini backed slowly up the run-down, with the shower of gold apparently increasing in volume. From a hasty glance he cast behind him, Cameron and Wyoming guessed that he meant to carry the trick right back to the extreme limit of the shallow stage. Suddenly something happened which delighted the rest of the spectators, although it caused the two friends a painful surprise.

Monsieur Blitzini had scarcely more than set his foot on the stage, with the shower of gold still falling, when the sovereigns disappeared, and in their place appeared a host of short stout cudgels, which began to descend in a rain of pelting blows on the conjurer's back and shoulders and arms. This spectacle of a man taken at a physical disadvantage caused the audience the greatest possible delight. Even the more knowing ones, who felt sure that it was part of the trick, applauded the scared look and pained expression which crossed Monsieur Blitzini's face, and which they accepted as the perfection of acting.

'The spooks are playing pretty low down on the wonder-worker, it seems to me,' said Wyoming compassionately.

'A stuffed club is no joke,' Cameron answered.

Monsieur Blitzini's weird face had undergone many changes of expression since the sudden transmutation of the precious metal to dull wood. Amazement, pain, terror, and despair chased each other across his features. Unable at last to bear the unexpected visitation any longer, the magician fled headlong to the run-down. As he crossed the line of the footlights, the shower of bludgeons vanished utterly, and an arc of sovereigns began again, falling from his hand to the hat. He closed this into the hat, showed that the hat was absolutely empty, and then returned it to its owner as swiftly as he could.

He stood before the spectators perturbed and panting, and he bowed again and again before the plaudits of the audience, getting his breath back in the brief respite to announce that this concluded the first part of the entertainment, and that there would be an intermission of ten minutes. With another salutation he withdrew, returning to the stage, and walking off hastily to the right.

'Well,' said Wyoming, as the magician disappeared from view, 'what do you think now?'

'I don't know what to think, as I said before. It's a very picturesque performance, I take it, all round.'

'I think I've found out the secret.'

'Stand and deliver,' said Cameron.

'Assuming that these disturbances are caused by exasperated spirits, as we are justified in doing——'

'Of course we are,' interrupted Cameron; 'you and I know modern magic from Alfred to Omaka, and we know that these little effects are quite beyond this man's power to control.'

'Assuming this, I say,' Wyoming continued, 'we have to discover why it is that Monsieur Blitzini meets with no misadventures except when he is on the stage. Now I have a theory. The front of the stage is circular, and it is only behind the arc of the footlights that the spirits torment him. It has struck me that perhaps there has been a reversal of the sacred circle of fire within which the sorcerer who evoked spirits was safe from their assaults.'

'A circle such as Benvenuto Cellini drew about him when he spent a lively night with the spooks in the Coliseum at Rome—is that what you mean?'

'Precisely,' answered Wyoming. 'He was safe within the mystic ring of flame because the spirits were without and could not break in. But Blitzini is at the mercy of the spirits confined within the flaming segment of the footlights, and he is only free from torment and torture when he breaks out.'

'I shouldn't wonder if you were right,' Cameron remarked, after a moment's thought. 'Your theory that he is the slave of the lamps and of the ring at least explains the phenomenon, which is otherwise almost inexplicable.'

During the performance of the second part of Monsieur Blitzini's programme the two friends had many opportunities of verifying the hypothesis, and they found that it was in accord with the facts. One of the tricks was performed wholly among the spectators without the return of the magician to the stage, and in this Monsieur Blitzini was perfectly successful and no untoward incident marked its performance. But the very next illusion, called *La Boisson de Tantale*, required the constant presence of the conjurer on the stage, where he operated an exchange of two liquors, filling two decanters placed at opposite extremities of the footlights; and although the ignorant spectators saw nothing at all unusual in the substitution of a cone of blue fire for a bottle of brandy, Wyoming and Cameron knew that the mocking spirits were again taking a freakish revenge on the froward magician who had dared to use their names without asking their permission. In another trick which appeared on the bills as *Les Drapeaux de l'Univers*, and which required the conjurer to produce mysteriously a bundle of the flags of all nations,

the spirits again gained the upper hand and changed the pretty silken emblems into a stiff cactus, the sharp branches of which bristled with thorns. In desperation Monsieur Blitzini crossed the line of the footlights, his face white with apprehension, but a glance of rigid determination still gleaming from his eye; no sooner had he stepped out upon the run-down than the green cactus gave way to a sheaf of Italian flags. In yet another illusion, the next to the last, entitled *Un Duel aux Cartes*, a card chosen by one of the audience was to be caught on the point of a sword when the spectator threw the pack in the air. The preliminary flourishes of the trick performed amid the audience were accomplished without let or hindrance, but when Monsieur Blitzini took up his position in the centre of the stage with the naked sword in his right hand, and when the spectator threw the cards toward him, the blade changed suddenly into a revolver, and the pack was riddled by six bullets discharged by the magician involuntarily, and as though in obedience to a will stronger than his own.

'That is pretty good; I wonder what he will do next,' said Cameron, quoting the charming tale of the parrot and the exploded ship.

'If he has as much sense as I give him credit for,' replied Wyoming, 'he will crawl along to the last trick like a streak of greased lightning.'

Cameron referred to his programme, '*Le Mage Invisiblique* is the last trick.'

'*Invisiblique* is good,' Wyoming remarked. 'I'd like to know what it means.'

'I take it to imply either that the *mage*—that is Monsieur Blitzini himself, of course—becomes invisible, or that he has his eyes blindfolded so that he cannot see. We've paid our money, and he will take his choice.'

'I have been wondering what he means to do with that tall cone there at the back. He must use it in this trick somehow,' Wyoming said; 'it looks like a huge extinguisher, doesn't it?—fit to put out the candles of Giant Blunderbore.'

As the American spoke, Monsieur Blitzini brought the cone forward and placed it by the side of one of the light little round tables, of which there were two, one at the right and one at the left of the stage. To the sharp eyes of the two friends it was evident that the magician's nerves were unstrung, and that he was in great haste to get to the end of his labours. He darted now and again suspicious glances behind him, as though in trepidation and

bodily fear. When he began to speak his voice was flurried and broken.

'Time runs short,' said Monsieur Blitzini, facing the audience, 'and I am now approaching the conclusion of my entertainment. I do not like to tax the kindness, or to impose on the patience of my friends, the Spirits of the Silent Sphere'—and here he shuddered slightly—'by whose aid I have been enabled to work the wonders you have beheld this evening. I shall have the honour of concluding my entertainment by exhibiting before you the strange feat which I have called the *Mage Invisiblique.* For this I need the assistance of two gentlemen from the audience, if they will kindly grant me their help.'

Monsieur Blitzini's eyes, which had been wandering fitfully during the delivery of this speech, now fell on Wyoming and Cameron, who waited for no further invitation, but sprang up the run-down and stood on the stage by his side.

'Thank you,' continued Monsieur Blitzini, bowing. Wyoming thought he detected a fleeting expression of relief on the conjurer's face, as though he was glad to have some one near him to come to his aid in case of need.

'The beginning of this experiment is very simple; it is only the end which is strangely startling and inexpressibly surprising. I put a pack of cards on the centre table here. Then I stand on this little table with a glass top and I ask these gentlemen to cover me over with this extinguisher, in order that I may be wholly unable to see what may take place on the stage. Then one gentleman will count thirty seconds, while the other gentleman takes a card from the pack, looks at it, shows it to you, and returns it. At the end of the half-minute both gentlemen lift the tall cone and release me from my solitary confinement in this dark cell. Then I will declare the card which the gentleman drew. First I ask the two gentlemen to examine this little table.'

The two friends looked at it carefully. It was very simple in construction; it had three light steel legs, and it had a top of thick plate glass. They declared themselves quite satisfied.

Monsieur Blitzini turned to the extinguisher, and as he stood beside it he was at least eighteen inches less in height than it was.

'Please examine this also,' he said, tapping it with his finger. 'You will see that it is very light, that it is made of several thicknesses of tough paper, and that there are no holes in it through which I can see.'

Wyoming lifted the cone up and held it against the light, and he saw no holes in it. Then he and Cameron scrutinised the external surface thoroughly. At last they declared themselves satisfied again.

'Very well,' said Monsieur Blitzini; 'then we will proceed at once. You understand what is to be done? I am to be covered for exactly thirty seconds, during which time one of you is to take a card from the pack, show it to the audience, and return it, leaving the pack in exactly its original position.'

The two friends told him that they understood what was required of them.

'Then here goes,' said Monsieur Blitzini, and although he was obviously trying to keep his voice steady, there was a distinct tremor in it. Placing both hands on the little table, he sprang upon it and stood erect. Wyoming and Cameron mounted on chairs, one on his right and one on his left; they raised the huge cone from the floor and slowly lowered it over him. It rested lightly on the rim of the little table.

Wyoming drew out his watch and began counting the seconds. Cameron stepped down from his chair, crossed to the large table in the centre of the stage, selected a card from the pack, glanced at it, showed it, returned it, and replaced the pack as it was. Then he walked back and mounted his chair again. Wyoming had stood motionless, with his eyes on the dial and his ears strained to catch the slightest sound.

At last he returned his watch to his pocket, saying, 'Time's up!'

Then he and Cameron, amid a dead silence in the hall, seized the extinguisher and lifted it slowly. As it rose in the air, they heard a sudden murmur of astonishment among the audience. In another second, as they lowered the light paper cone to the stage, they saw the cause of this. The little table whereon Monsieur Blitzini had stood was empty. The magician had vanished; he had gone without a sign or a sound; it was as though he had melted into air.

Wyoming and Cameron examined the extinguisher, but it was no heavier than it had been, nor was the little table in any way altered. The spectators clapped and shouted with delight at this most original trick. The two friends looked at each other in surprise. After exchanging puzzled glances, they stepped down from the chairs on which they had been standing, and again examined the little table and the cone. But they found no clue to the disappearance of the magician.

Then there arose from the body of the hall a loud cry for the conjurer to appear. It was a hearty and genuine call such as few of the strolling actors who had starred at the Pavilion had ever been honoured with.

'Fetch him out,' said Wyoming to Cameron; 'you know the topography of the place.'

Cameron crossed at once to the two dressing-rooms on the right of the stage, whence Monsieur Blitzini had issued at the beginning of the performance. Wyoming heard him knocking, and then opening a door. He said a few words to the impatient spectators, suggesting that they should give Monsieur Blitzini breathing time after his extraordinary exertions.

The audience took this in good part. There was a cessation of the loud shouts and tumultuous applause. Then in a minute Cameron came back, looking flushed and scared.

'He's not there,' he whispered to Wyoming.

'Then where is he?' asked the American, startled and with a sinking heart.

'I don't know. I've searched the stage and the two dressing-rooms and the short passages, and I'm sure he is not here.'

'How could he get out? You told me there was no stage-door.'

'And there is no space under the stage where he could hide. I do not understand it at all. Perhaps your spooks——'

But here Cameron was interrupted by impatient cries from the audience, who wanted to see the conjurer.

Wyoming stepped forward to the centre of the stage, and made a neat little speech to the spectators, in the course of which he said that Monsieur Blitzini had evidently determined that his last trick should be a complete success and a total surprise, and that to this end he had chosen to vanish. He concluded by expressing his belief that they all appreciated the remarkable skill and address that Monsieur Blitzini had revealed that evening.

The audience gave Wyoming a round of applause, and broke up in high good-humour.

The two friends returned to their hotel, musing much and saying little.

'Do you understand the deep damnation of his taking off?' asked Wyoming, as they parted for the night.

'Not the least bit. Do you?'

'No.'

At breakfast the next morning Cameron passed the *Witherington Daily Times* across the table to Wyoming, and asked him to read the final paragraph of the local reporter's account of the strange events of the preceding evening.

'Whether Mons. Blitzini,' so this paragraph began, 'derives his extraordinary command over *légerdemain*, as our lively neighbours call it, from the abnormal sources set forth in his advertisement, or no, is a philosophical conundrum upon which we need not enter now. *Credat Judæus Apella.* But besides his being a juggler of no mean proficiency, he is undoubtedly a humourist of the first water. Trick after trick was transmogrified in the most whimsical and facetious fashion, and the admirable facial powers which Mons. Blitzini exhibited in depicting emotions of surprise and consternation, contributed not a little to this effect. He well deserved the applause lavished on him continuously, and the excitement of the intelligent and brilliant audience knew no bounds when the extinguisher, which played an important part in the last trick, was removed, and Mons. Blitzini was found to have vanished in the twinkling of an eye. We can confidently recommend all who like an exhibition of finished skill and a hearty laugh to attend Mons. Blitzini's second performance advertised in our columns for to-night. We hope, however, that on this occasion he will not carry his invisibility so far as to refuse appearing to receive the plaudits of the admiring audience he has so cleverly amused.'

Wyoming read this carefully, then he laid the paper on the table and said, 'This reporter seems to be a good many kinds of a fool.'

'I suppose we shall go to-night to see Monsieur Blitzini's second performance?' asked Cameron.

'Of course,' was the American's short reply.

CHAPTER II.

MONSIEUR BLITZINI'S SECOND PERFORMANCE.

MONSIEUR BLITZINI'S second performance never took place.

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK.
BRANDER MATTHEWS.

Sir Christopher Mings.

(See Pepys' Diary.)

SIR CHRISTOPHER MINGS was a shoemaker's son,
He clouted a shoe ere he sighted a gun,
His mother was born aboard of a hoy,
And she suckled her lusty sailor-boy,
And she taught him to make
Such a name for her sake,
As caused the dour Dutch dogs to quake.
So here's to the name of Sir Christopher Mings,
A great name—greater than My Lord the King's.
He fought and bled for England,
He's lying dead for England,
And foul fall shame
On England's fame,
When Englishmen forget the name
Of stout Sir Christopher Mings!

He swept the Channel from end to end,
From chalky Dover to flat Ostend,
And never a Dutch dog of them all
Durst yelp while he was Admiral;
He had such a whip
To make them skip,
If ever they ventured athwart his ship!

But worth must wither with Kings like Charles,
And the hands that kinged him were Albemarle's,
'A shoemaker's son!—Odd's fish! it is plain
'Twould anger the Stuart and Castlemaine.'
So London may fume,
And the fleet be in gloom.
But Rupert and Albemarle rule in his room.

'Twas on a Friday, the first of June,
We sighted the Dutch in the afternoon,
Half-seas over at anchor they lay,
Between the Foreland and Dunkirk Bay;
  And we swore not to shirk,
  As we set to work,
Till we sent them flying to strong Dunkirk.

And from Friday noon until Monday night,
The sea was a-fire with the roaring fight,
And the sun rose up, and the sunset fell,
And the calm stars shone on the raging hell,
  And the chain-shot swings,
  And the grape-shot rings,
And fellest of all fights Christopher Mings.

Crash! from the guns of the bloody Dutch—
Sir Christopher Mings must walk with a crutch;
Crash! through his shoulder: crash! on his face—
Sir Christopher Mings is in evil case,
  As he falls by the mast,
  With his faith still fast
In Rupert—in Rupert, for rescue at last.

But Tromp and De Ruyter—they knew their trade,
And Monk was a madman, and Rupert delayed,
And the *Swiftsure*—the craven—sailed off to the Nore,
And the *Prince Royal* ran on the Galloper shore,
  And, shame to be said,
  We turned and we fled;
Oh, well that Sir Christopher Mings lay dead!

They came to the Court, and old Rowley heard,
And, a while, old Rowley spake no word,
But his eye for a moment looked like a King's,
As it filled with a tear for Sir Christopher Mings,
  The stoutest in fight,
  The loyallest knight,
That ever drew sword for his land's birthright.

He was borne to his grave by his brave old tars,
Their faces all grim with the seaming scars;
Not a man of the throng was of noble strain—
My Lords were all courting the Castlemaine!
  But the bravest and best
  Of Englishmen pressed
To lay Sir Christopher Mings in his rest.

And scarce in his grave was their hero low,
When up stepped the bearers, a dozen or so;
Their eyes were all wet, though their teeth were set—
They had served him long, and they loved him yet—
  And they spake this prayer,
  With their grey heads bare,
To him they knew to be highest there.

'We are here, we twelve, we have nought but life,
And we pledge that life to our Captain's strife,
In the blood of the Dutch we would slake our grief;
Give us a fire-ship, choose us a chief,
  And we'll shrivel the wings
  And burn out the stings
Of the wasps that killed Sir Christopher Mings.'

O Captain and Men, be your praises sung
Wherever men utter our Island's tongue,
And when for her life-blood her worst foe springs,
God send her a second Sir Christopher Mings!
  Whate'er his degree,
  With spirit as free,
To hold her inviolate Queen of the Sea.
    So here's to the name of Sir Christopher Mings,
    A great name—greater than My Lord the King's—
      He fought and bled for England,
      He's lying dead for England,
        And foul fall shame
        On England's fame,
      When Englishmen forget the name
        Of stout Sir Christopher Mings.

A. H. BEESLY.

John Greenleaf Whittier.

ON December 17 the poet Whittier enters on his eightieth year. Few men have more fairly earned the world's respect than the militant Quaker poet who was the Tyrtæus of the Abolitionist cause. For many years every action of his life was scrutinised beneath the pitiless limelight of hostile, if not malignant, criticism. Yet no one has even hinted that, throughout the struggle with which his name is associated, Whittier ever showed himself mean in motive, false in purpose, or dishonest in assertion.

His early training and the part which he played in the Anti-Slavery agitation are the distinguishing features of his life, and the most potent influences of his literary career. Dependent for refinement on his own internal resources, living outside the range of European culture and beyond the reach of the transcendental movement, removed from the sound of the conflicts of poetical schools, Whittier had few temptations to imitation; he created a new world for himself; he formed his own style and his own habits of thought. Before he threw himself into the Abolitionist cause, home surroundings were almost the only influences by which he was affected. Whatever may be his position in the world of letters, he has made it for himself; the keenest eye for plagiarisms fails to detect in his mature writings any use of the thoughts of others. Horace Greeley called him the most national of American poets. In a limited sense the judgment is correct. He is American in his choice of subjects, his scenery, his images, his religion, his politics. He is American also in the practical character of his poetry. He sings of no useless ideals: he dreams no impossible dreams in unknown regions; he keeps close to the common affairs and interests of men. He is essentially home-bred; no representative of foreign schools of thought presided over the birth or the growth of his genius.

Whittier was born in 1807 at a lonely farmhouse, three miles north-east of Haverhill, a town in the Merrimac valley in Essex county, Massachusetts. He comes of a Quaker stock. His paternal ancestors settled in the neighbourhood in 1638. On his mother's side he has French blood in his veins, for Greenleaf is a translation of Feuillevert—

The name the Gallic exile bore,
St. Malo! from thy ancient mart.

As Quakers and as Huguenots Whittier's ancestors for generations suffered religious and social persecution. This inheritance of Puritan intolerance still grates on the poet's memory, and explains the bitterness which he sometimes displays towards the grim elders who saw in toleration as grave a crime as heresy.

The old homestead in which he was born still stands—a plain solidly framed house, built by the first of the Whittier colonists more than two centuries ago. From the front door a wooded grassy bank slopes down to the little brook—

The music of whose liquid lip
Had been to us companionship,
And, in our lonely life, had grown
To have an almost human tone.

The house, nestling in the valley, is shut in on all sides by hills; but the oak forest which, in Whittier's youth, 'swept unbroken to the northern horizon,' has been partially cleared. The brook, tumbling down from its ravine, and whispering at the garden wall, played an important part in the poet's boyhood. Along its windings he wandered, watching with childish delight the fishing-rod of Uncle Moses; on its banks he knew the haunts of the earliest and latest wild flowers, from the hepatica or the wood anemone 'to the yellow bloom of the witch-hazel, burning in the leafless October woods.' It is a country full of quiet beauty, of woods and velvety lawns and round-backed hills, of scenery which is not bold or impressive, but is stored with unobtrusive treasures for the quiet eye of the observant watcher.

In those days of self-sufficing agriculture, food and clothing were produced at home: towns and shops were little needed; visitors were rare, and glimpses of the outside world few and far between. The farthest spot to which he travelled from the secluded farm was the meeting-house at Amesbury, where on First-days he sometimes worshipped. In 'Snowbound' he has sketched with mingled grace and vigour portraits of his home circle, and set them against a background of the interior of a New England farmhouse painted with the fidelity of a Teniers. His father, a silent man, who had passed his *Wanderjähre* among the trappers—his mother at her wheel, teaching simple lessons from Bible history, or telling stories of Red Indian perils—dangers brought home to the children by the old garrison-house which stood close to the farm—his aunt, Mercy Hussey,

The sweetest woman ever fate
Perverse denied a household mate—

his Uncle Moses, 'innocent of books,' but 'rich in love of fields and brooks'—his brother Matthew, and his sisters Mary and Elizabeth, made up the little world of human beings in which the poet lived.

Uncle Moses instructed the boy in woodcraft and field lore. Of other schooling he had little. Joshua Coffin, afterwards a life-long friend and fellow-soldier in the Abolitionist struggle, taught him his A B C in a smoked and dingy room, which served for a 'ragged winter school.' This, with a few weeks under an unnamed 'brisk wielder of the birch and rule,' and a term at Madame Chadbonne's, included all the regular instruction which the boy received. Since then he has read widely. Perhaps his occasional display of learning is due to the comparatively recent date of his self-education. The home library was limited. The Bible and Ellwood's 'Davideis' were his only poetical reading; Sewel's History of the Quakers, a volume beloved of Charles Lamb, and Chalkley's Journal, with a handful of controversial tracts, exhaust the literature of his early boyhood. Instead of books the 'barefoot boy,' who ran his mother's errands, or hoed in the cornfields, or played on the slopes of Job's hill, studied Nature. He underwent an apprenticeship which proved of inestimable value. As he himself writes—

I was rich in flowers and trees,
Humming birds and honey bees;
For my sport the squirrel played,
Plied the snouted mole his spade;
For my taste the blackberry cone
Purpled over hedge and stone;
Laughed the brook for my delight
Through the day and through the night,
Whispering at the garden wall,
Talked with me from fall to fall;
Mine the sand-rimmed pickerel pond,
Mine the walnut slopes beyond,
Mine, on bending orchard trees,
Apples of Hesperides.

The freckles and the tan and the stain of the wild strawberry are still upon his poetry; his verse seems written to the sound of the whetstone on the scythe, or to the rhythmic beat of the flail.

Such music as the woods and streams
Sang in his ears he sang aloud.

In his fourteenth year a wider world began to open before the boy's expanding consciousness. From the lips of a wandering gaberlunzie he first heard the songs of Burns; from Jonathan Plummer, a travelling pedlar and local poet, he learned the power of rhyme. But the great event of his boyhood, and even of his literary life, was the perusal of Burns's poetry. It opened to him a fresh world; nature wore a different appearance, and contained for the future a deeper meaning. New ideas germinated in his mind; his creative faculty was stirred. 'I began,' he writes, 'to make rhymes myself, and to imagine stories and adventures.' In 1826 he caught a glimpse of literary fame. A poem from his pen, probably that on 'The Deity,' was printed in the poet's corner of the *Free Press* of Newbury Port. Struck by the promise of the verses, Garrison, at that time the editor of the paper, rode out to Whittier's home to urge upon the lad the advantages of a wider education. Mainly by his advice Whittier went, at nineteen years of age, to the Latin School at Haverhill. The legend that he paid for his education by cobbling has been discredited by his most recent biographer. He was then a tall, slight lad, erect in figure, with those dark flashing eyes which still command attention. Two years later he became the editor—in fact, though not in name—of the *Manufacturer*, a Boston paper, written in support of Henry Clay and Protectionist principles. For the next four years he was alternately schoolmaster, farmer, and newspaper editor. But he disliked journalism, and his health could not stand its strain. In 1832 he gave up his connection with the Hartford *Review*, and returned to the plough at Haverhill. From that time forward he has lived at, or near, his old home. When the farmhouse was sold in 1840, Whittier moved with his mother and sisters to Amesbury. His later life has been spent at Danvers, a village close to Amesbury. He has never married.

The only movement which disturbed the even tenour of his quiet life was the anti-slavery agitation, in which he took so prominent a part. The Quakers were from the first identified with the Abolitionist cause. They set a practical example by liberating their own slaves in the Southern States. Lundy, who with Garrison edited the 'Genius of Universal Emancipation,' at Baltimore, was a Quaker; to the same body belonged the first President of the New England Anti-Slavery Society. His Quaker ancestry, his friendship with Garrison, his generous character and ardent temperament, all impelled Whittier to fight the battle of the slaves. The cotton trade was then the chief source of American wealth; any attempts to disturb its existing conditions were

viewed with alarm. Southern planters and Northern merchants commanded the press, tuned the pulpits, and hounded on the mob in the track of the Abolitionists. To champion the cause of the slave meant to encounter personal violence, social ostracism, civil persecution, literary martyrdom. But Whittier was not the man to shrink from danger or self-sacrifice when once his sympathies were enlisted. In the first of his 'Voices of Freedom' he addresses Garrison—

> My heart hath leaped to answer thine,
> And echo back thy words,
> As leaps the warrior's at the shine
> And flash of kindred swords.

The cause to which he devoted his best years and energies has triumphed; and now America makes him hearty reparation.

> The hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe return
> To gather up the scattered ashes into History's golden urn.

In 1831 Garrison started the *Liberator* in a small, dingy, ink-bespattered office on the third storey of the Merchants' Hall at Boston. In that 'dark, unfurnitured, mean' room, as Lowell has written, 'the freedom of a race began.' Whittier appeared, even in that 'day of small things,' as Garrison's resolute supporter. In 1833 he published his pamphlet, 'Justice and Expediency.' His second poem on the slave question shows the spirit with which he entered on the conflict. It is addressed to the memory of Storrs, one of the first victims of the persecution which awaited the Abolitionists.

> Thou hast fallen in thine armour,
> Thou servant of the Lord!
> With thy last breath crying Onward!
> And thy hand upon thy sword.

For many years Whittier poured forth his impassioned lyrics, which throb and beat, beneath the Quaker drab, with the hot blood and vehement spirit of the soldier. On December 4, 1833, a convention assembled at Philadelphia to form the American Anti-Slavery Society. Whittier's thoughts will go back to the grey December morning of the 5th, when he found Garrison drafting the last lines of 'the Declaration of Sentiments.' 'I set,' says Whittier, 'a higher value on my name as appended to that Declaration than on the title-page of any book. Looking over a life marked by many errors and shortcomings, I rejoice that I have been able to maintain the pledge of that signature, and that in the long intervening years

My voice, though not the loudest, has been heard
Wherever Freedom raised her cry of pain.'

In discussing Whittier's literary position, too much stress cannot be laid upon the two points already emphasised. Two periods may be distinguished in his poetical career. In the first the polemical, in the second the literary, element predominates. No scientific frontier can be drawn between them; but the publication of 'Snowbound' in 1866 marks the final line of demarcation. Naturally it is in the first of these two periods that the influence of his early boyhood and of the movement with which he identified himself held most undisputed sway.

Born and bred a Quaker, Whittier possesses the independence, the love of liberty, the simple piety, the moral sincerity which are the birthright of his sect. Like many of the Society of Friends, he combines illiberal principles with liberal practice; narrow in doctrine but broad in sympathy, he has consecrated his life to a noble cause with large-hearted unselfishness. His artistic nature was stunted by the severity of his early training, as well as by his religious fervour. The austere practical people among whom he was bred attached no value to culture. Their sense of beauty was dwarfed by their perception of moral worth. Whittier is above all things a moralist, a reformer, a preacher. He uses verse to rouse the hearts of men; but poetry is only a means to an end, it is not an aim in itself. He even apologises to his sister for the cultivation of his poetical tastes, as though it were wasted energy

To con, at times, an idle rhyme,
To pluck a flower from childhood's clime,
Or listen, at life's noonday chime,
For the sweet bells of morning!

Whittier's martial spirit might at first sight seem to contradict the influence of his Quaker training. Friend of peace though he is, the molten stream of his glowing utterances betrays the warlike fire that burned within him. But there is here no inconsistency. The Quakers drew their strength from the English yeomen who formed the backbone of Cromwell's army. While renouncing carnal weapons, they abandoned none of their natural combativeness. The language of their worship teems with military metaphors. As a boy, Whittier's favourite character in Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress' was Greatheart; his favourite scene the encounter between Christian and Apollyon. Though it was only a wordy war that Whittier waged, he manifests that spirit which answered Rupert's trumpets with 'Let God arise, and let His

enemies be scattered!' During the Civil War he is reported to have met a Government official commissioned to inspect the timbers of a Northern cruiser. 'Friend,' said he, 'thee knows that I am a Quaker, and do not believe in ships of war; but in this case I would advise thee to be very careful that the timber is sound.'

From the moment that he heard

> the voice that bids
> The dreamer leave his dreams midway
> For larger hopes and graver fears,

poetry became, as he himself said, 'simply episodical, something apart from the real object and aim of my life.' 'Voices of Freedom' bear every mark of strong feeling. Intensity of conviction and the grace of sincerity give his best lyrics a compactness which the quintessence of artistic finish often fails to produce. They are, as Lowell says in the 'Fable for Critics,'

> struck off at white heats
> When the heart in his breast like a trip-hammer beats.

Even now his appeal to the Bay State stirs the blood:

> Sons of men who sate in council with their Bibles round the board,
> Answering England's royal missive with a firm 'Thus saith the Lord,'
> Rise again for home and freedom! Set the battle in array!
> What the fathers did of old time, we their sons must do to-day.

On the other hand, 'Voices of Freedom' are bare of ornament, betray, by repetitions and jarring rhymes, signs of rapid composition, often stray into noisy declamation, and carry the habit of pious ejaculation and exhortation to inopportune excess.

The faults of Whittier's early poetry may be summed up in the lack of the Hellenic element, the want of artistic taste. The void was never entirely filled, so enduring was the influence of his early training and of the Abolitionist movement. But in his later and more literary poetry the blemishes are less conspicuous. As his mental horizon widens, the grey atmosphere of his Quaker youth grows brighter. He has read and thought for himself. In the process of his self-culture his early faith seems to have wavered. Perplexed by voices calling from the right and left, his sight dimmed by the impenetrable darkness of life's mystery, he hesitated—

> Like childhood listening for the sound
> Of its dropped pebbles in the well,
> All vainly down the dark profound
> His brief-lined plummet fell.

The mental struggle left its trace in many of his poems; but he has won his way back to his old unquestioning trust. In his later poetry the piety, simplicity, and frankness remain; but to these are added a wider sympathy, a more tolerant spirit, a deeper culture, a mellowed taste, and a growing love of poetry as an art. He retains that power of landscape-painting which was the inheritance of his childhood. His descriptive poetry is never cold. He paints in fresh bright colours, transfers the living scene to his page, and, without pausing to analyse or philosophise, gives us pictures of Nature at first hand. His poetry is fresh and simple; but it is not deep. He is a genuine story-teller. The want of depth here becomes a positive advantage. He never mars the vivid directness of his narrative by the intrusion of his own personality. Mystic beauty, dreamy grace, rounded art, lofty imagination, are not his gifts. He would not, if he could, soar into the unreal world of Shelley.

'Snowbound' is, on the whole, his most finished production. In it his pictures stand out with sharply defined outline against the snow; his background gives emphasis and expression to every feature which he describes. A selection from his poetry has been recently published. It contains 'Mogg Megone,' a poem which Whittier himself condemned as a big Red Indian strutting in a Scotch plaid; it does not include any of the Songs of Labour, such as the 'Corn Song,' 'the Huskers,' and 'the Drovers,' or 'Randolph of Roanoke,' 'Ichabod,' 'Telling the Bees,' 'Among the Hills,' 'My Soul and I,' 'Follen,' 'Questions of Life.' Yet, whether as specimens of his poetry or as illustrations of his mental growth, all these deserve to be included in any selection.

Much that is interesting in Whittier's life and writings must necessarily be omitted from so brief a sketch. After all, his life is his most perfect poem. Higher value attaches to his noble services to humanity than to his intellectual efforts, great though they undoubtedly are. 'A dreamer born,' the chivalrous philanthropist, who

> left the Muse's haunts to turn
> The crank of an opinion-mill,
> Making his rustic reed of song
> A weapon in the war with wrong,

sacrificed literary fame to win the gratitude of a people. The world honours, even while it most regrets, his choice.

R. E. PROTHERO.

Miss Ellen Terry's Gretchen.

MAID of haviour demure,
All that's sweet and all that's pure;
Girl awakening to love
As to message from above;
Scarce aware that aught is evil,
Sainthood's horror of the devil;
Misery heaped on misery
When the fiend has conquered thee;
Truth of spirit, truth of heart,
Overmastering Satan's art;
When the fatal sword should fall
True to Heaven in spite of all;
Joy made perfect in a sigh,
Sorrow's very ecstasy;
Though the Poem's stress and storm
Reach us in an alien form,
Goethe's passion, Goethe's will,
Find we in thy Gretchen still.

W. H. POLLOCK.

Marrying and Giving in Marriage.

By Mrs. Molesworth,

Author of 'Hathercourt Rectory,' 'Carrots,' &c.

CHAPTER IV.

It was April—to my mind, if the weather be fine, the prettiest month of the year in Paris—when the Verneys arrived there. And the weather *was* fine, peculiarly so; and not Paris only, but the world and life in general, seemed very bright and attractive to Aveline and her sister Leonora the first morning they awoke to find themselves across the Channel.

'Isn't it nice? I wish I might say jolly, but I daren't,' said Leo, as she and Aveline stood at the open window, from which by craning their necks just a little they could see into the Champs Elysées. 'Isn't it nice to see the sun shining so, and—and—to have no governess?'

Aveline laughed.

'Yes,' she replied, 'it's very nice for us anyway, Leo. I'm afraid papa and mamma have had a good deal of worry.'

This was true. There had been a dark side to this silvery vision of coming to Paris. Mr. Verney had had to work a good deal harder than he was fond of doing in getting up the statistics and technical knowledge requisite for a thorough mastery of the tangled question he was to set to rights. For though he had an excellent head on his shoulders, he was constitutionally indolent. And Lady Christina, who could certainly be accused of no such weakness, had been driven nearly wild by the discussion of ways and means necessitated by the family flitting. Paris and its ways had changed since the days of her youth; and even had it not been so, the views or no views of a young lady in her father's

house *à propos* of rent and wages, of butchers and bakers and coals, differ materially from the painfully minute consideration of such subjects forced upon the mother of a large family; above all if she be the wife of a man of small income but recognised social position. Nor was the poor woman as yet by any means out of the wood of her perplexities. Aveline's words of misgiving had scarcely passed her lips when Lady Christina put her head in at the door.

'Aveline, my love,' she said, 'I think you had better help Fenton a little with the unpacking. It is not really that there is too much for her to do, but if you and Leo were with her, showing her how you would like your things, it might cheer her up a little. She says she is sure she is going to have one of her bad headaches. Indeed, all the servants are so cross, and we must smooth them down a little before nurse and the children come. I've sent her to lie down for half-an-hour and given her some sal-volatile.'

'Then you don't want me to go to her at once?' said Aveline, coming forward.

'No, but in the meantime you might help me by sending a word to Lady Ayrton—she begged me to write as soon as we arrived. Here is her address—no—what have I done with her letter?—that is Mr. Hereward's note of this morning. He will be here between three and four he says, to see if he can be of any use, as I told you, so we must not go out before then. I must be civil to him, for he has done his best, poor fellow, though really this appartement is full of inconveniences. Where *is* Lady Ayrton's letter? I cannot remember what day she said they were leaving.'

'I know her address if they are still at Pau,' said Aveline. 'They will not have left yet—there will be time for her to get a letter.'

'Yes—oh yes. Then just send her a word, dear, and give her our address again. She is so very stupid about addresses, poor dear. Tell her I will write as soon as I have a moment, and that you hope Sir Francis is pretty well, and send my love. Write nicely—you know how.'

'Yes, mamma,' said Aveline.

'And sign yourself "yours affectionately,"' added Lady Christina, stopping a moment at the door.

'Certainly, mamma, if you wish it,' replied the girl, though with a shade of hesitation.

'I do wish it. It will please her,' said her mother, as she at last disappeared.

Aveline stood by the table a moment in a sort of vague consideration. She felt a little, a very little puzzled.

'Avé,' said Leo from the balcony—she had discovered while her mother was speaking that the window at the other side of the room actually opened upon a tiny balcony—'Avé, look here—there's just room for us two if we squeeze a little—isn't it nice? Come out here for two minutes. You'll have plenty of time to write the letter. Avé, tell me, don't you think mamma is——'

'Is what?' said Aveline slowly. But she did not look at her sister as she spoke—her gaze was turned to the sunny street below, where a pretty group of children and nurses were passing at the moment. The little voices sounded clear and merry, some birds were twittering cheerily as they hopped from branch to branch of a tree whose fresh green leaves one could almost see growing; from further off the rumble of carriages, the sound of a barrel organ softened by the distance, fell not unpleasantly upon the ear. Everything was cheerful and lively and novel. Why did it all seem just a shade less bright than a few minutes ago? Why was the sunshine a faint degree less vivid?

'That mamma is what?' Aveline repeated; and now she turned her eyes to Leonora and looked the child full in the face.

'I don't like to say it. You are so particular, Avé,' replied Leo. 'What I would like to say if I dared, only I haven't said it, so you're not to scold—is, don't you think mamma is *after something*?'

'Leonora, you are very naughty, very, very horridly disrespectful and suspicious,' said Aveline indignantly. 'It just shows that I must never speak to you as if you were at all grown up—which you *aren't*.'

'No, indeed,' interposed Leo disconsolately; 'this frock is, I vow it is, two inches shorter than my last. And when I showed it to Fenton, she said my lady wouldn't hear of my having them longer. Just look, Aveline,' and she stretched out as far as she could in the restricted space, a pair of very pretty, irreproachably black-silk-stockinged legs, 'I'm *sure* you couldn't see as much of them in my old blue serge! *You* needn't snub me too, Avé.'

'Which you aren't, and won't be for a long time,' pursued Aveline, as composedly as if Leo had not spoken, 'if you can speak so of mamma. I feel ashamed of having heard it—just when I was thinking how wonderfully kind and good and patient poor

mother has been through all the worries she has had about coming here. She has not been the least vexed with me, and I know I don't help her much.'

'She won't let you. It's not your fault,' said Leo. 'After all, I've not said anything shocking. It's just because mamma has been so very kind and patient—you *are* rather provoking sometimes, both you and papa want shaking now and then—that I said that. Don't you know when Freddy's extra quiet, as it's his nature to be dreadfully noisy, we always say, "What can he be after?" Everybody's the same. If you took to scurrying about and putting everything in order and being dreadfully energetic, I'd say to myself, "Avé must have got something in her head."'

'No, it wasn't quite like that you said it. You meant that mamma was in a way coaxing me, or trying to come over me, as the boys say. And it isn't a nice way to speak of one's mother, Leo. Besides, what reason *could* she have for anything like that?'

'I don't know,' said Leonora bluntly; and then she sat still for a moment or two. 'Aveline,' she went on, 'do manage for me to be in the drawing-room to-day when Mr. Hereward calls. I do so want to see him again.'

'I think mamma is very wise indeed to keep you in short frocks,' said Aveline laughing, as she got up to go and write her letter. The happy look had come back to her eyes, and the sunshine was as bright as ever again.

Mother and daughters were together in the smaller of the two salons that afternoon when Mr. Hereward called. It was quite against all home-rules for Leonora to be seen 'out of the schoolroom,' but for the moment Lady Christina's usual arrangements were very much upset. Governess there was as yet none, and the only 'schoolroom' possible in the appartement promised to be this same little drawing-room opening with folding doors into the larger one.

'Let her stay with us for this day or two, mamma,' pleaded Aveline. 'She has been working hard lately, and I will make her talk French as much as I can. Here is my letter to Lady Ayrton; please tell me if it will do.'

Lady Christina's rather sharp face seemed to relax as she read the sheet that Aveline gave her.

'Yes,' she said, 'it will do,' and she smiled a little. 'You might have made it a—well, a *little* more expansive.'

Aveline raised her eyebrows with a look of surprise.

'More expansive, mamma!' she exclaimed. 'But I know Lady Ayrton so slightly.'

'You know that I consider her one of my dearest friends. And don't get into that habit of repeating my words, Aveline. It *is* so rude.'

'I beg your pardon, mamma,' said Aveline meekly. 'And what about the letter? You see I meant to make it very—very respectful as it were. I know she has been a faithful friend to you, and I do respect her and feel grateful to her for that.'

'Ah, well, never mind what I said. I dare say it will do very nicely, my dear,' said Lady Christina, mollified again. And Aveline, as she went off to announce the good news to Leonora, thought to herself that it really was very nice for mamma to be so kind and easily pleased.

She looked bright and happy that afternoon when Nigel was announced, and his eyes rested on her for a moment with even more admiration than he had yet felt for her.

'So good of you to come so soon, dear Mr. Hereward!' said Lady Christina.

'Yes,' added Aveline smiling; 'do you know, it is quite absurd, but though we have not been here twenty-four hours, Leo and I have been saying to each other that it would be quite a treat to see an Englishman?'

'Are you so very patriotic?' said the young man. 'How much more animated she has grown. She has lost that dreamy, half-frightened look she used to have. It had a charm of its own, but this is still more charming,' he thought. And something of these thoughts must, in spite of himself, have appeared in his eyes, for a very very slight tinge of colour came over Aveline's fair face. Alas, poor Nigel! 'And where is Leo?—that is to say, Miss Leonora. Must it be that now?' he added, turning to Lady Christina.

'Oh, dear no,' she replied quickly. 'Leo is quite a child. Where is she?' and hearing herself summoned, Leo, very conscious of the objectionable short skirt, emerged from the balcony, and came forward, for once in her life, rather shyly.

'She is growing a very tall child,' said Mr. Hereward, as he shook hands, with less tact than might have been expected of a young diplomatist.

Lady Christina did not smile, and hastened to change the subject.

'I am, and so is Mr. Verney, so very much obliged to you for

all the trouble you have taken for us,' she said graciously. I hope we shall see a great deal of you while we are here, though, I suppose, you have many friends and plenty of engagements?'

'Of course I know lots of people,' he said, 'and I am kept very busy, too. But I can certainly always find time to come to see you if you will let me. There are no friends like old friends. You must tell me if I can be of any use, at any time and in any way.'

Here Leo opened her mouth as if about to speak, and then shut it up again. She looked so funny that Aveline began to laugh. Nigel glanced at her with some surprise—he was thinking to himself that he had never heard her laugh before, and that it was astonishing how well it suited her, notwithstanding her statuesque style.

'What is it, Leo?' said her mother. 'Speak, child.'

Leo grew red.

'I was only thinking,' she said, 'there are such lots of places and things we want to see, and papa says he's going to be so busy here.'

Mr. Hereward looked up eagerly. 'I should be delighted to act as cicerone,' he began.

'You are very kind,' Lady Christina replied amiably, while quick as lightning she mentally reviewed the situation. 'There can be no risk in it,' she thought; 'he is quite safe. Satisfactorily poor, that is to say, so poor that he can't dream of marrying. No half-and-half position. I have never heard of his doing anything silly; he just admires all pretty girls, knowing he can go no further. With Fenton and Leo, Aveline might go to see the galleries and churches with him now and then, and it would make it seem natural for her to go about with the Ayrtons when they come, if I at once adopt the *rôle* of not being able for much. And he is an old friend—cousinly sort of friend.' 'You are very kind,' she repeated slowly. 'I should be very glad if you could escort the girls once or twice to see a few of the sights. They are quite country cousins here, you see, and I am really not strong enough for sight-seeing. Nothing knocks me up so.' A slight, almost imperceptible movement of Leo's chair here made her mother glance at her sharply. 'What are you fidgeting about, Leo?' she said. 'It will be easier in a week or two, when the friends we are expecting from the south come,' she went on to Mr. Hereward. 'Aveline will then never be at a loss for escorts, and I shall, I trust, have found a governess for this wild tom-boy here,' with an indulgent smile in Leonora's direction meant to counteract the

sharp glance in case Nigel had perceived it; 'but till then it will be very good of you to act showman a little.'

'When shall we begin then?' asked Mr. Hereward. 'No time like the present, and I am quite free to-day. Have you made any plans?'

'I am going to Madame de Boncœur's as soon as I can get ready,' said Lady Christina. 'I should like the girls to join me there later in the afternoon.'

'Shall I take them to the Louvre Palace?' said Nigel, 'and thence across the Tuileries gardens to the rue de Touraine? It would give them a first rough idea of where they are.'

'I should like it very much,' said Aveline.

'Then go and get ready both of you, and tell Fenton to accompany you, of course. It will do her headache good.'

'And you like your appartement, I hope!' said Mr. Hereward. 'I am sure it cannot be all you wish, but it really was not easy to find anything that would have taken you in except at a very much higher rent. Madame de Boncœur's ideas and mine were somewhat opposed—her notions of your requirements were rather amusing. But, on the whole, I don't think we could have done better.'

'I quite believe it,' said Lady Christina. 'The situation could not be better, and no doubt we shall get used to it all in a few days. Of course we have plenty of room at present, but the three little ones will be coming in two days.'

'Oh, of course,' said the young man vaguely.

'We couldn't leave them behind, poor little things,' said Lady Christina, who had begun to long for Freddy and Lilian and Cecil already, though she would not have owned it to her husband; and Nigel, seeing the maternal love in her face, began, man-like, to think he had done her injustice.

'No, certainly not,' he said warmly.

'But, oh,' Lady Christina went on, allowing herself a momentary burst of confidence, 'it *is* so hard to manage such a family with so little money. Don't *think* of marrying, my dear Mr. Hereward, till you are at the top of the tree, or very near it.'

The young man laughed, but his laugh was slightly forced and constrained.

'No,' he replied, 'nowadays I suppose romance has to go to the wall.'

'You can't help its going to the wall when debts and difficulties push their way in,' said Lady Christina. 'I am parodying

the old proverb. But it is certainly better to give romance the go-by before marriage, than to let it say farewell to you *after* marriage.'

Mr. Hereward had strolled to the window, for he had not sat down since the girls left the room.

'Life isn't an easy matter to see one's way through. After all, it seems sometimes as if the soundest philosophy were to "gather the roses while you may,"' he said lightly.

'Provided you don't mind scratching your fingers in the process,' said Lady Christina, rather pleased with her smart rejoinder.

They both laughed, but she had no idea of his unspoken reply. 'So long as I'm sure it is only *my* fingers, I do not mind.'

And then the door opened, and Aveline and Leo, bright with pleasure and expectancy, came in, the discreet Fenton looming in the background.

Along the rue de Rivoli, as everybody knows, it is impossible of a fine day to walk three abreast. It fell out naturally therefore that Aveline and Mr. Hereward made their way in front, Leo and the maid bringing up the rear some little way behind, and to this arrangement no one made or felt any objection. Leo was completely absorbed in looking about her, and under the rain of her lively remarks, the sunshine and the agreeable movement around, even Fenton's plaintive countenance began to cheer up. As for Aveline, it may be seriously questioned if she had ever felt so happy in her life.

'I had no idea Paris was so delightful,' she ejaculated more than once, to her companion's half-amused but wholly admiring satisfaction.

'It is very nice—of a bright day, and—and when everything seems to match,' he said, smiling down at her, as he thought to himself how this unspoilt simplicity, this readiness to be pleased, added new charms to the girl already so lovely in his eyes. Just then a whisper from a lady passing them, an Englishwoman of course, caught his ear. 'Honeymooners evidently,' she observed archly to her companion, as her glance fell on the stately young pair. A flush rose to Nigel's temples, but Miss Verney walked on in serene unconsciousness.

'What would she have thought if she had heard it?' he said to himself.

Then she turned to him with some question, and their talk fell on the place and things about them. And in a few minutes the little party found themselves at the entrance to the Louvre.

Inside the galleries they naturally kept more together. Leonora overcame her shyness and chattered like what she was—a schoolgirl out for a holiday. And indeed on her elders, too, something of the holiday spirit seemed to have descended. Not often had the treasures of the 'Salon Carré' been admired by more smiling eyes, or the 'galerie d'Apollon' trodden by more springing feet.

'Thank you so very much—we have so enjoyed it,' said Aveline as they were nearing their destination, for 'The rue de Touraine is the next street on our right,' Nigel had said a moment before.

'I hope we may have many, at least several more such afternoons,' he replied. 'Lady Christina said something about friends joining you before long. Are you expecting relations?'

'Oh, no,' said Aveline, 'I think mamma must have meant the Ayrtons—they are to be here for some weeks on their way from Pau.'

She spoke indifferently, but with a slight shadow in her voice. Some instinct made her dread the coming of these friends of her mother's whom she scarcely knew.

'The Ayrtons!' repeated Mr. Hereward. 'Oh, yes, I heard they were coming. But Sir Francis Ayrton is a confirmed invalid. I scarcely see how he can be anything in the shape of an escort for you.'

'Nor I; I don't quite understand what mamma meant,' said Miss Verney. 'Unless it is to drive about with Lady Ayrton—she is very kind, I know.'

'But very fat, poor woman. I don't think she would ever get to the top of the Arc de Triomphe, for instance—if you really mean to do the sights thoroughly you must, at least sometimes, have a man with you. There is a—a young Ayrton,' he went on slowly, looking at Aveline as he spoke, 'but——'

'But he is *horrid*,' said Aveline, impulsively. 'I shouldn't say so, perhaps, for I have only seen him two or three times; and it isn't kind—especially as his father and mother are really good friends of mamma's—to speak against their son—I dare say they think him delightful.'

'I should doubt it,' said Nigel, dryly.

'Why, you are as prejudiced as I!' exclaimed Miss Verney; 'mamma was giving me a lecture about being prejudiced the other day *à propos* of this very Mr. Ayrton.'

'*A propos* of *him*!' said Mr. Hereward, in a curious tone of

voice. 'No, Miss Verney, in this instance at least I am not prejudiced. I had the—the misfortune to be at school with the person in question. But do not let us talk any more about disagreeable subjects, and so spoil the flavour of our afternoon at the end.'

Here Leonora, who had been walking beside the others, for they were now in a quiet street where the passers-by were few, suddenly made a remark which seemed to restore Mr. Hereward's slightly disturbed equanimity.

'Avé,' she said, 'don't you remember mamma said she *did* expect to have some relations here? The Roslands, that nice Amy and Mr. Rosland. Perhaps it is they whom we, or at least you, are to go about with.'

'Oh, yes,' said Aveline. 'I had forgotten about them. It must be Mr. and Mrs Rosland she meant.'

'To be sure,' said Nigel, heartily. 'And very nice people they are. But here is Madame de Boncœur's, so I must say good-bye.'

'Aren't you coming in with us?' said Miss Verney, in a tone of disappointment. 'I am just a little afraid of Madame de Boncœur, and even more of her granddaughter, even though mamma is sure to be here. And you know them so well. Why won't you come in?'

He shook his head laughingly.

'It is not their day,' he said. 'Madame de Boncœur would, I assure you, be utterly astounded if I marched in. She'd never get over it—she would not indeed. Pray tell Lady Christina that I shall hope to have the pleasure of calling in a day or two to see if I can be of any use. You will find Mademoiselle de Villers a very nice girl—you will really,' he added, as he raised his hat in farewell.

Lady Christina had been sitting with her old friend for the last hour. They had met with genuine pleasure and interest on both sides, though not without some natural emotion; for it was seven years since they had seen each other, and then but hurriedly, and nearly four times as long a period had elapsed since the days of Lady Christina's youth, when she and her sisters had accompanied their father in his official capacity to Paris. The elder of the two women was less changed than the younger.

'You do not look a day older, dear madame,' said her guest, 'whilst I, I feel, am dreadfully aged,' and she sighed. 'I have so many cares—a large family and small means.'

'But a good husband and, I hear, charming daughters,' replied the old lady, patting Lady Christina's hand encouragingly. 'These are compensations in your large English families. Think how empty *my* home is! Only my daughter and the one grandchild. Ah, yes, there is always the *revers*.'

'Well, of course, when one has them, one cannot wish they were not there,' agreed Lady Christina. 'But I could with great philosophy have resigned myself to one daughter only, I assure you, instead of three—not to speak of four sons.'

'Seven!' exclaimed the old lady, lifting up her hands. 'Tell me all about them;' and Aveline's mother, not unwillingly, plunged into a description of the family party.

'I must see them soon, especially your eldest, and she and my Modeste must be friends.'

'I hope so indeed,' said Lady Christina. 'Aveline has never had many intimate friends. I have endeavoured to form her mind myself and to guide her judgment. Young people are so easily deceived, so apt to be carried away by outward appearances.'

The old lady nodded.

'Doubtless,' she agreed. 'Still, they must learn to form their opinions. My Modeste has a great deal of character, I am glad to say. She will, I think, make an excellent wife and mistress of a household. And I think I may say we have made a good choice for her, though nothing is as yet announced.'

Lady Christina pinched up her lips.

'Ah, indeed,' she said, 'and I hope your granddaughter is - is quite pleased? Have she and the gentleman met yet?'

Madame de Boncœur looked at her and began to laugh.

'My dear friend,' she exclaimed, 'you seem to take your notions of us from old-fashioned French—or English—novels. Do you really think I would drag my granddaughter from the convent to the altar, there to marry a man she had never seen? Of course Modeste has seen Monsieur de Bois-Hubert; he has visited at my house for some time by my permission, as have done others, equally unobjectionable, but with none of whom things went further, as natural sympathy and attraction were evidently wanting. Modeste has had, and will have before things are concluded, ample opportunities of judging for herself. It is only fair and reasonable. All *I*, *we*—her mother and I—are concerned with, are the first essentials, without being assured of which no man should be admitted to our intimacy. You will see Monsieur

de Bois-Hubert here often. I intend to have week-day receptions, too, for a time; the young people may perhaps dance a little sometimes, and by the end of next month or so I hope Modeste will have decided in favour of this gentleman. Indeed I feel sure of it. But at present all I tell you is in confidence.'

'Thank you. I am flattered that you should give it me,' said Lady Christina sweetly; 'and you may be sure I shall observe it strictly. I shall not mention this even to my daughter.'

'Oh, as for that,' said the old lady, shrugging her shoulders a little, 'I leave it to you. If the young creatures become friends, it will be only natural that Modeste should give your child some of her confidence.'

But Lady Christina, though she said nothing, privately resolved that Aveline should be cautioned against over-intimacy with Modeste de Villers. 'French girls are so differently brought up —have such strange ideas about marriage, and so on,' Aveline should be told.

And she thought to herself that this sort of modern modification of the 'dreadful system of arranging marriages' was really far from an improvement. 'For all the world,' she confided to her husband, 'like servant-girls and their sweethearts "keeping company," as they call it.' To which Mr. Verney replied that for his part he had always thought 'keeping company' a most sensible institution. No more, however, was said on the subject of Modeste's prospects by Madame de Boncœur, for just then the door was thrown open to announce the Misses Verney, and Mademoiselle de Villers was summoned to make their acquaintance.

'I hope we are not late, mamma,' said Aveline, when the first civilities had been exchanged, and Madame de Boncœur was smiling with kind approval on the fair face of her old friend's daughter. 'We walked fast, I think, and Mr. Hereward brought us the shortest way.'

'Mr. Hereward?' repeated the old lady inquiringly, and with a slight tone of surprise.

'Yes—yes—our mutual friend. He undertook to show the girls and my maid—who was with them, of course—the way here,' replied Lady Christina, airily. 'I preceded them, to have my little chat with you, dear madame.'

'Ah, indeed,' said Madame de Boncœur, though still seemingly a little perplexed.

'How tactless Aveline is!' thought her mother. 'She blurts out everything. There is no need to tell every trifle;' while Madame de Boncœur was secretly wondering if she had made some mistake in supposing the young man to be too decidedly poor to marry. 'If it be so, Christine, English though she be, would never be so insane as to let him and that lovely girl—he so attractive too—be together in this intimate way.'

Then the English ladies took their leave, the young girls naturally attracted to each other in spite of their shyness.

'Miss Verney is beautiful, and as good as she is beautiful, I feel sure,' Modeste burst out when alone with her grandmother. 'How sorry I am mamma was not at home to see her! And the little one—not that she is very little, what long black legs and short skirts she has!—she too is charming, I am certain; there is a look of so much intelligence and mischief in her eyes. If only we were not so frightened, they of my French and I of their English!'

CHAPTER V.

MADAME DE BONCŒUR'S Thursday evening receptions proved a great success. Among all the Paris gaieties in the midst of which the Verneys quickly found themselves, these so-called 'unceremonious' little dances were what Aveline enjoyed the most. She soon came to feel at home with Modeste de Villers, and would have gladly become even more intimate with the intelligent and amiable French girl but for Lady Christina's repeated warnings to be careful.

'She is so very nice and sensible, mamma,' Aveline ventured to remonstrate, 'I am sure you would like all she says.'

But Lady Christina shook her head.

'Madame de Boncœur's granddaughter is doubtless one of the best specimens of a French girl,' she replied, 'but I do not like their ways of looking at things. Has she ever chattered about being married, to you, Aveline?'

'N—no. She has alluded to it very slightly once or twice, but not in any definite way. Surely her grandmother and mother won't force her to marry anyone she doesn't like, will they? It would make me so unhappy to think so—poor, sweet little Modeste!'

'You need not pity her, my dear. French people look at

things from a radically different point of view from ours,' repeated Lady Christina. 'And they are very wealthy—they can afford to let the girl be a little fanciful if she likes,' she added, with a sincere-enough sigh.

And the tiny cloud of misgiving, as regarded her friend's happiness, faded away from the girl's mind. It was not difficult in these days for Aveline Verney to see everything *couleur de rose*; all combined to make life appear to her a better and more beautiful thing than she had ever pictured it. Her mother grew kinder and more 'approving' every day; Aveline felt that she was admired wherever she went, more openly than had been the case in England—for French people are not so afraid as their neighbours of expressing their admiration, and many a graceful little compliment fell pleasantly on the father's and mother's ears, and the knowledge of her success gave to the naturally timid girl the confidence and animation she had lacked. Then the weather continued lovely, and at least two or three times a week Nigel Hereward repeated his *rôle* of cicerone, apparently to the perfect content of all concerned. And Aveline, whose training had left her in many ways inexperienced enough, despite her twenty years, lived in the present, and looked not to the future—there could be no risk in anything 'mamma' sanctioned.

Perhaps of all the lookers-on, little Leo, with her sharp eyes, rendered still sharper by her affection for her sister, saw the most of the game and its dangers.

One Wednesday morning, about three weeks after the Verneys' arrival, a letter from Pau reached Lady Christina, the contents of which appeared to cause her the liveliest satisfaction.

'They will be here this evening,' she exclaimed. 'I am so pleased. I must ask Madame de Boncœur for an invitation for them for to-morrow.'

'Who will be here this evening?' asked Aveline. 'The Roslands?'

'The Roslands!' repeated her mother, with more asperity than she had often shown of late; 'my dear Aveline, are you asleep? I told you that the Roslands are very probably not coming now. No, of course I was speaking of the Ayrtons.'

'I am sorry—about Amy, I mean,' said Aveline. 'If she had come I could have gone about with her, as you said, and it would not have been so tiring for you.'

'Go about with Amy!' said Lady Christina, for the second time committing the solecism of repeating another person's words, 'I

never thought of such a thing. Amy is very little older than you, and much giddier. If I ever spoke of your going about with anyone, I must have meant the Ayrtons.'

And her tone did not encourage Aveline to say more. That evening Mr. Verney and his daughter dined with some English friends at their hotel, and Lady Christina went off to welcome her dear Lady Ayrton. She appeared in excellent spirits the next morning, displaying peculiar interest on the subject of Aveline's dress for that evening.

'I thought my pale blue would do quite well,' said the young girl. 'My white—the new white—is quite dressed enough for a large ball.'

But her mother decided in favour of 'the new white.' 'We must get it done up again, or manage another, if there is any large ball soon,' she said philosophically, to her daughter's surprise.

'I promised to go to Sophia this afternoon,' she went on. 'I feel a little anxious about Sir Francis; he seemed very knocked up with the journey. But I hope she and her son will be able to come to the rue de Touraine to-night.'

'Oh, is *Mr.* Ayrton here?' said Aveline, opening her eyes, and her accent was not expressive of pleasure. 'It will spoil Madame de Boncœur's parties, if he comes to them,' she said to herself.

'Of course Mr. Ayrton is here. It is not likely he would be away from them, especially with his father so ill. Their only child too! Poor Sophia! she was saying to me this morning how she wished she had a daughter!'

'Yes,' said Aveline, sympathisingly, 'I wish she had. She seems so gentle and kind. I shall be glad to see her again.'

'You have a good little heart of your own, my child,' said her mother as she left the room, and Aveline reddened with pleasure.

'Leo and I are going with Mr. Hereward to the Invalides this afternoon, mamma,' she ran after her to say.

'Very well—only don't tire yourself for this evening,' her mother replied. 'As Sophia was saying,' she reflected, 'we must arrange for Aveline to get into the way of going out with them as much as possible. I should think she will be glad to drive about instead of going sight-seeing on foot with poor Mr. Hereward. But he has really been most obliging.'

'She is prettiest in white after all,' thought Nigel that evening, when, on entering the large salon at the rue de Touraine, he caught sight of Miss Verney standing beside Mademoiselle de

Villers. Indeed I'm afraid I think her prettiest in whatever she happens to have on.'

In another moment Aveline passed him, dancing with Monsieur de Bois-Hubert. She was smiling, and there was a little flush of unusual excitement on her face, for Modeste had just whispered to her that she wanted to talk to her quietly for a few minutes, she had something very important to tell her. Mr. Hereward waited till the dance was over, and then came forward to ask for one.

'You don't seem the least tired,' he said, 'though we really walked a good way to-day.'

'It was so pleasant, I couldn't have felt tired,' she said brightly. 'Then the next dance but one, if you like?' she added, as Modeste touched her arm.

'I want to tell you myself—grandmamma said I might,' Mademoiselle de Villers began. 'I dare say you can guess what it is, dear Aveline.'

'You are going to be married,' Aveline exclaimed.

'Yes—at least that will come in due time. In the first place there will be of course *les fiançailles*, but I wanted you to know before it is formally announced. I count you quite like one of my best friends, though I have not known you long. And Monsieur de Bois-Hubert—he likes and admires you so much. I hope we shall always be friends, dear Aveline.'

'And you,' said Aveline, returning her little caress, for they were in a corner where they could not be seen, 'you are very happy—quite happy, dear Modeste, I hope?'

'*Quite* happy. Maurice is all I wanted. He is so good and kind, and clever too. And I know he truly cares for me. I can feel it somehow—he is so different from some others I have known. No, I have no misgiving; I feel sure I have done right.'

'But,' said Aveline, in surprise, 'I did not know it was like that here—in France. I thought your parents simply told you whom you were to marry, and that you had to obey them.'

'My parents gave their consent *first*, of course,' said Modeste. 'They have said on several occasions that this or that gentleman would not be disapproved of by them if I liked him. But then they left me free to decide. I should never have wished to marry anyone they *disapproved* of, I hope. Indeed, I scarcely could have done so. I know that no gentlemen they do not think well of are allowed to become intimate with us. That is only a matter of course.'

'I understand,' said Aveline, quietly. 'I think in some ways French girls are to be envied, Modeste—and in your case especially. I am *so* glad you are so happy. There is Mr. Hereward, he will be wondering what we are talking about.'

'He is so nice — so well-bred and *sympathique*,' said Modeste. 'It was he that first told me about you, Aveline. Dear Aveline, I hope you will some day be as happy as I am,' and she stood for a moment looking after her two young English friends as they walked away.

'I suppose it is not yet quite decided,' she thought, 'otherwise she would have told me.'

'I think I know what Mademoiselle de Villers was telling you, if I am not very indiscreet,' said Nigel, when they were too far off for Modeste to hear. 'Her engagement to Monsieur de Bois-Hubert is soon to be announced?'

Aveline blushed and nodded.

'If you have guessed it, I have not told you,' she said.

'I am very glad. He is a thorough good fellow,' Mr. Hereward went on. 'I think they will suit each other excellently.'

'It all seems very happy,' said Aveline, with a tiny sigh, but Nigel overheard it.

'What are you sighing about?' he asked; but though the words were said half laughingly, something in the tone, still more perhaps in the expression of the eyes bent down upon her as she glanced up to answer his question, made her falter again and look down.

'What was it?' he said, 'tell me;' and for an instant he yielded to the impulse strong upon him and laid his right hand tenderly on the little gloved one that lay on his left arm. 'I don't like to hear you sigh, even ever so little, my——' but the last word and the 'darling' that was following it were smothered ere they were spoken.

Aveline looked up again.

'I don't know,' she answered, her voice trembling a very little, 'I really and truly don't quite know, Mr. Hereward. It was a mixture of things. I can't put it in words.'

'And if you could, would you tell me?' he asked softly.

'That I know still less,' she answered, smiling—more quickly recovering her self-control than he. For they were in the midst of the dancers by now; not far off, Lady Christina's well-shaped head was to be seen, the aigrette of feathers surmounting the

coils of hair nodding, not in the breeze, but with her lively movements. And Aveline knew that it was never for very long that her mother's eyes lost sight of her. Yet why she shrank from them just now was another of the things she could scarcely have defined.

'Shall we not dance?' she said, after a moment's silence, half timidly.

Nigel obeyed her at once, but without speaking, and as he turned his face towards her she saw that he was very pale.

They went through the waltz with but the interchange of a few commonplace remarks. Aveline felt a vague curiosity to know what Mr. Hereward would do when it was over.

'Will he take me back to mamma?' she thought, 'or will he go on with what he was saying?'

And Nigel himself, in a tumult of feeling, felt as if fate were leading him he knew not whither. The merest accident might have betrayed him into wild disregard of everything but the ardent love with which his heart was beating, his veins throbbing, into throwing to the winds all his prudent resolves, all his impossible unselfishness. For in Aveline's sweet eyes, in the tones of her faintly troubled voice, he had read the confession she did not know was there.

Fate came—as she always does—cold and pitiless this time, in the garb of Lady Christina, faultlessly equal to the occasion, pioneering through the crowd a stout elderly lady with a gentle anxious face, and a thick-set, ruddy-hued young man, clumsy though not exactly ungentlemanlike in his bearing, with a good-natured awkward smile illuminating not unpleasantly his rather heavy features.

'Poor fellow,' many would have felt inclined to say, seeing him thus for the first time, 'not very much at home in a ball-room, but a good, honest, unaffected sort of young man,' and a slight movement of surprise might not improbably have followed the announcement that this simple-looking, not to say loutish, youth was the only son and heir of the *very* rich Sir Francis Ayrton, a great *parti*, but 'so shy in ladies' company, poor fellow,' many a mamma would have added indulgently.

For Wilfred Ayrton, with Garthdean in prospect, Lady Christina's honeyed accents in his ears—for he was of the sort to love flattery even while he saw through it—and an agreeable sense of general prosperity, was at his best. Nor did his geniality and amiability diminish when he caught sight of the

tall white-robed figure with the lovely face and coronet of golden hair, with the eyes which even he could see were beautiful—more beautiful than of yore, for the soul had awakened: to this Undine, too, had come her woman's heritage of love and sorrow! And he who understood, who felt with her and for her through every fibre of his strong yet gentle manhood, must stand by silent, and, as he slowly realised the whole, despairing and bitterly self-reproachful; while Wilfred Ayrton muttered a coarse 'By Jove! a deal handsomer than I fancied,' and, thickly smiling, held out his hand and pressed that of Aveline in his clumsy grasp.

A first flash of revelation seemed for a moment to turn Nigel giddy. Miss Verney had perforce withdrawn her arm, and he stood free. Before anyone could notice him, he had moved away and disappeared in the little crowd.

'I couldn't have touched that fellow's paw—not to save my life. If *that* is what is to be,' he groaned. 'My sweet innocent Aveline—and if I have made it worse for her! God forbid—I must at least pull up now and undo the mischief if I can. But her mother—she must know what he is, surely. How can she think of it?'

And Aveline stood smiling, happy still; she could afford to smile and be cordial to her mother's friends to-night, though she shrank somewhat, and inwardly laughed at herself for so doing, from resigning to Mr. Ayrton's touch the hand which so recently had received Nigel's tender little caress.

'Is she not looking well—this child of mine, dear Sophia?' said Lady Christina, effusively. 'I have so looked forward to this meeting again.'

'You are, indeed, a most enviable mother,' said gentle Lady Ayrton. 'I should hardly have known you again, dear Aveline. Can you have grown? You seem to me to have done so—you have more colour than formerly, in any case.'

'I am enjoying myself so much in Paris—I suppose that makes me look particularly well,' said Aveline, brightly. 'And now mamma will enjoy *herself* doubly. I think she has been counting the days for you to come.'

'It will be delightful to be here together,' Lady Ayrton replied. 'Your mother has promised to let you be half *my* daughter here. I am counting upon you to go shopping, and I don't know all what, with me.'

'Then you'll let me off duty a bit, I hope, my lady,' said Mr. Ayrton, speaking for the first time. 'It will be very good-natured

of Miss Verney, I'm sure—and I'm by no means certain that I shall want to be let off,' and he laughed rather noisily at his own wit.

Aveline glanced up at him in some surprise. But she could not help smiling at his broad ruddy face, and the expression of satisfaction which she caught sight of in Lady Ayrton's eyes helped to turn the scale in their favour.

'Poor thing,' she thought. 'It is touching to see how proud his mother is of him, though he is so clumsy and awkward. I think he is improved—he looks much better-tempered than he used to, and it is only kind to make the best of him for her sake.'

So Aveline smiled again, more graciously this time, at Mr. Ayrton's flattering speech.

'Aveline will enjoy of all things going about with you,' said Lady Christina. 'Poor child—she has not seen as much of Paris as I should have wished. You see I am so busy, and so easily tired,' she added appealingly to Lady Ayrton.

'Oh, but, mamma, we have seen a good deal,' whispered Aveline; 'you forget how much Leo and I have been about with Mr. Hereward.'

'Ah, yes,' said her mother, though she did not seem particularly grateful for the reminder. 'I could not coop them up altogether—so they have seen a few of the regular lions with different friends—among them young Hereward has been very obliging, poor fellow.'

'You mean Nigel Hereward, I suppose?' said Lady Ayrton. 'He is still here, I know. I heard from his step-sister, Mrs. Trevine, the other day. Yes—we used to know him.'

'Know Hereward—I should think so. We were at school together—got into some scrapes together, if I'm not mistaken,' said Wilfred, laughing again.

His mother glanced at him with a look almost of disgust. But this time her glance was unperceived by Miss Verney. Mr. Ayrton's tone struck her disagreeably nevertheless—she disliked to hear Nigel's name on his lips.

'I hope Sir Francis Ayrton is pretty well?' she said gently.

'Much better to-day, thank you. When you come to me to-morrow, as I hope you will, he will be delighted to see you,' replied Lady Ayrton. 'He has not forgotten you, I assure you.'

'I remember him too, quite well,' said Aveline, 'though I think I have not seen him since I was a little girl. He was so kind to my brothers and me.'

Then the elder ladies began to find out that they were tired and would like to sit down. Mr. Ayrton did not dance, Aveline was thankful to hear, though it was bad enough to have to accept his arm when he offered to take her to get an ice. Still, she was not sorry to go to the dining-room where the refreshments were to be had, thinking that on the way she might perhaps catch sight of Mr. Hereward, whose defection she had become aware of some time ago. She had promised him another dance—the next to the one just ending—and she glanced about with a slight dread of his not finding her.

He was not to be seen, however. She answered at random to Mr. Ayrton's attempts at making himself agreeable, but she smiled so amiably that he did not perceive her abstraction, and told his mother afterwards, with unusual amiability, that things 'couldn't be getting on better.' But the evening was over for Aveline when, a few moments after leaving the dancing-room, some one touched her gently on the arm, and turning she saw Monsieur de Bois-Hubert. Her face fell a little, as the quick-witted Frenchman was not slow to perceive. He hastened so far as he could to reassure her.

'Mademoiselle,' he said, 'my friend Mr. Hereward asked me to make his excuses for him. He was obliged to leave early—he was most distressed—most deeply distressed, but counted on your indulgence.'

'Thank you,' said Aveline, 'thank you very much. It is not of the least consequence—we shall be leaving, ourselves, immediately.'

She tried to smile, but the effort was not very successful.

'What an innocent child she is!' thought Modeste's *fiancé*. 'Poor little thing—what can be the matter? Nothing going wrong, I hope. Hereward did not seem very happy either.' For his own prospects predisposed him to take a peculiar interest in the affairs of his and Modeste's friends.

'Hate Frenchmen—set of affected monkeys, the whole lot of them. Don't you think so, Miss Verney?' said Mr. Ayrton, engagingly.

And Aveline smiled again, and said, 'Yes, certainly.'

'Are you tired, my love?' asked her mother, when they found themselves in the carriage, driving home. For Aveline's silence struck her. 'Such a pleasant evening.'

'Yes, very;—no, thank you, I am only a little sleepy,' the girl answered. Her mother's kindness touched her. 'If she had

always been like that,' thought Aveline. 'I wish—I wish I could tell her everything I feel.'

'You have been walking too much,' said Lady Christina, 'but now you will have more driving. To-morrow you will have a nice day with Lady Ayrton. She is coming to fetch you at twelve.'

'Yes,' said Aveline, indifferently. To-morrow was not one of 'Mr. Hereward's days,' as she and Leo had got into the way of calling them. She knew he was to be very busy till late; he had said so. On Saturday or Sunday perhaps she might see him again, and doubtless he would explain the reason of his sudden disappearance. So Friday was spent pleasantly enough, in driving and shopping with her mother's friends. Lady Ayrton she felt it impossible not to like, so gentle and affectionate was she. And poor Sir Francis—how ill he looked! The girl's kind heart went out to him, for Sir Francis could be very charming still when he chose, and his clever caustic little speeches, modified for her benefit, struck her as amusing in the extreme.

'I would like them both,' she told Leo that evening, 'I do like them—if only it were not for the son.'

'Is he so very horrid?' asked Leo, sympathisingly.

'No, I really don't think he is as bad as I expected. He is only very stupid and heavy, and I can't help feeling sorry for him when his father snaps at him so, though he doesn't seem to see it. He must be very good-natured, and he is nice to his mother. It was he that gave me these lovely flowers,' and Aveline's eyes rested admiringly on some exquisite roses Leo had been helping her to arrange.

But she was less disposed to feel amiably towards the Ayrton family the next day, when there came a note asking her to accompany the mother and son to an exhibition of paintings that afternoon and to return to tea.

'I don't think I can go,' she began, 'I was out all yesterday, and——'

'Of course you can go,' interrupted Lady Christina decidedly. 'I am delighted for you to see those pictures, and the entrance is ten francs each. I really can't afford that kind of thing for ourselves'—and Aveline had not the moral courage to say more. But she did what she could.

'Leo,' she said to her sister, 'I feel certain Mr. Hereward will call to-day. *Try* to see him and to tell him I *had* to go out; you may say you knew I didn't want to go. And try to plan for us to go somewhere else with him next week.'

Leo nodded sagaciously, and somewhat less reluctantly Aveline joined Lady Ayrton when the summons came.

The picture exhibition was crowded. It took time and patience to get near enough to see. And then Lady Ayrton had cards to leave at a house at some little distance. It was rather late before they got back to the Hôtel d'Anvers.

'You will be glad of a cup of tea, my dear child,' said Lady Ayrton, as they made their way upstairs to her drawing-room, 'and poor Sir Francis will have begun to despair of us. Wilfred, order tea at once, please.'

Mr. Ayrton turned to obey, and the ladies went on by themselves. Voices reached them as the door opened—Sir Francis's, sounding more interested and cheerful than usual, and another. Whose was the tall figure that rose from the side of the invalid's couch and came forward to meet them? For a moment Aveline was too surprised to take in the fact of his presence—then a thought went quickly through her. 'Can Leo have told him where I was? Clever little Leo!' and her smile was very sweet and bright as she shook hands.

'I have had a most agreeable half-hour, you will be delighted to hear, my dear Sophia,' said Sir Francis, with his peculiar accent of latent irony. 'Mr. Hereward has been so truly kind as to sit listening for that length of time to an old invalid's grumbling and fancies. Nay, I mean what I say,' he went on; 'the Fates have been really amiable to me since I came here; yesterday Miss Verney with her gracious sympathy, to-day another old friend equally patient, and now Miss Verney, again. But what has become of my stock consolation, the staff of my old age and weakness, my dearly beloved son?'

'He stayed downstairs to order tea, Francis—that is all,' said his wife, rather shortly. 'I am so glad to see you, Mr. Hereward,' she went on, turning to Nigel. 'I suppose you knew of our coming, through Mrs. Trevine.'

'Yes,' he replied, 'my sister mentioned it to me, but I also knew you were coming from Lady Christina Verney.'

'Ah, of course—you and they are old friends. I don't need to introduce Mr. Hereward to you, Miss Verney,' said Sir Francis, with one of his keen glances at the two as they stood together near him.

'Oh, no,' said Aveline, smiling. 'That would be very unnecessary. Mr. Hereward has been our guide here—he has

shown my little sister and me nearly all we have seen of Paris,' she said.

'Yes,' said Nigel, with an involuntary glance at her—a glance which did not escape Sir Francis, 'we have had some very happy days here.'

At that moment Mr. Ayrton entered the room and came up to the group.

'Hallo, Hereward,' he said, holding out his hand with what he meant to be easy cordiality, but which looked more like swagger, 'how are you? Some time since we've met. Tea's on its way upstairs all right, my lady.'

Nigel shook hands quietly.

A few moments later, in the little bustle of tea making and distributing, he found himself beside Aveline and out of the immediate hearing of the Ayrtons.

'I hope you did not think me very rude for running away so abruptly the other evening,' he said softly. 'I really could not help it—I had important letters to write, and I did not know it was so late.'

'Monsieur de Bois-Hubert gave me your message,' said Aveline. 'Have you been at our house this afternoon, Mr. Hereward?' she went on, eagerly.

'Yes,' he said—but that was all, and his tone seemed to the girl somewhat melancholy. A quick instinct of impending trouble thrilled through her, but she repelled it.

'Cannot we arrange for some more sight-seeing next week? Leo does so look forward to it,' she said, blushing a little at her own boldness.

'Leo is not the only one who has looked forward to it,' he said gently. 'I am not a child now, but I can assure you I have never enjoyed anything as much before. I shall always remember it.'

'Why do you speak in that, way' asked Aveline abruptly, 'as if it had come to an end?'

'Because——' he began, and then stopped. 'By the bye, Miss Verney,' he went on, 'I wanted to tell you I had no idea the Ayrtons,' dropping his voice, 'were such friends of yours, when I spoke of them the other day.'

'They are only old friends of mamma's,' said Aveline. 'I thought you were a little hard on—on the son,' she said, fearful of being overheard.

Mr. Hereward looked up—at that moment Wilfred was helping

his mother at the tea-table, for Lady Ayrton insisted on pouring it out herself in regular English fashion even at a Paris hotel. He looked good-natured and cheery—of late he had decidedly been at his best.

'Perhaps he *is* improved,' Nigel allowed.

'But,' said Aveline, 'I want to talk about our sight-seeing.'

Mr. Hereward turned to her with an indescribable expression in his eyes.

'I am going away,' he said. 'I have to leave next week.'

Aveline *felt* herself growing pale. She made a tremendous effort.

'I must help Lady Ayrton with the tea,' she said through the trembling of her voice, 'men never understand such things,' and she got up from her chair and went forward to the table, grasping it tightly as she stood beside it.

(*To be continued.*)

At the Sign of the Ship.

In omnibus rebus requiem quaesivi, sed non inveni, nisi in nooxkins ond booxkins. 'In all things have I sought peace and found her not, save in nooks and books,' said Thomas à Kempis, according to his biography in the Elzevir edition of the *De Imitatione Christi.* Only in books and corners is peace to be found in our day, among wars and rumours of wars political and social; yes, and even literary. For peace is not to be found in all books, still less in the *Quarterly Review*, and the quarrels of authors and the ineptitude of outsiders have of late been conspicuous and noisy. Never may I plunge into a dispute about the date of Phillips's *Cides*, and *Splendid Shillings*, as a newspaper calls these works in an article pleading for strict accuracy. I never read *Cides*, nor *Splendid Shillings* either, for that matter. But a reviewer who is not a specialist in Restoration literature (most of which appears rather trashy) may have his humble ideas about the Ethics of Reviewing.

* * *

Lately we have heard enough from people of 'a delicate morality, stap me,' about the mystery of Log-Rolling. This meaningless term seems merely to denote the Puff Mutual. A man puffs his friend's or accomplice's books on the understood condition that they shall puff his. The people who do this belong to Mutual Admiration Societies. They also combine to denounce the books of persons who are not of their set. This appears to be a fair description of the vice of Log-Rolling. As one not unacquainted with the handicraft of reviewing, I may humbly remark that I don't believe in the conspiracy. I do not believe that there are three men in England so mean as to praise a book for the purpose of being praised in turn themselves. On the other hand it is perfectly true, and long may it be so, that men of similar literary tastes and knowledge of the same topics will drift together and become friends in Apollo, and praise each

other's work when they think it deserves praise. It has always been so, and always will be so. Virgil and Horace were members of a Mutual Admiration Society of this kind, and were reviled by Messrs. Bavius and Maevius.

Et jam dente minus mordeor invido, says Horace, proving that many 'had a tooth,' as the French say, an invidious tooth, against him. In all literary times it has been the same. Swift, Arbuthnot, and Pope were a Mutual Admiration Society, and Grub Street did not like them; so were Johnson, and Goldsmith, and Bozzy, and Reynolds; so were Ronsard, and Joachim du Belly, and Remy Belleau; so were Molière, and Boileau, and Racine, at one time, and Boursault and De Visé, and Cotin and Chapelain complained. A Mutual Admiration Society was the famed Romantic *cénacle*, and, if they all praised Hugo, they did not 'log roll'—it was not mutual—Hugo never said a word for George Sand, she remarks, though George Sand said so many for him. If young Mr. Tennyson, if young Mr. Keats were favourably reviewed in their early time, who reviewed them? Mr. Arthur Hallam and Mr. Leigh Hunt, their familiar friends. Among little people as well as great the rule will hold, and comrades in literature will praise each other to-day as much more famous people have done before. But if the praise they give is undeserved and conferred in ignorance, then they are indeed to blame. For what business has any man to comment on a matter in which he is not competent? Away with him, even if his motive be mere ignorant kindness of heart.

* * *

It seems a hard thing to me, then, if one man of letters may not criticise another favourably because that other is his friend. As a rule, he does not admire him because he is his friend; on the other hand, he sought his friendship because he admired him. As an aged reviewer, I can say, for one, that the most enthusiastic, not to say gushing, reviews I have ever written, were notices of the work of men whom I had never seen nor corresponded with, and who never wrote a review in their lives. If the writers became my friends later, am I therefore bound to be silent when I think their new performances demand admiration?

* * *

Let us take another case. What is a Reviewer to do when his friend has written a bad book, or a book that seems bad to the

critic? Apparently the moralists who think the Reviewer is never to praise his friends when they do well, hold that he is bound in honour to censure them when they do ill. This friendship is too like the conduct of the typical Roman Father, who was always sending his sons to the Lictors. If a Reviewer finds that his friend's book deserves censure, I think his conduct will be guided, in Aristotelian phrase, by the 'how much' and the 'how.' If he knows that his friend can stand it, he may publish a courteous and temperate critical remonstrance. But if the case calls for more than that, he will not set up a bawl of 'impostor,' 'charlatan,' 'ignoramus,' and so forth, he will merely be silent. All ill-doing does not deserve 'exposure,' still less exposure by a friend. Sir Walter Scott used to say, 'Never mind the *exposure*. God help us all, and let us hope that these people will, as old Mrs. Macknight used to say, mend the tenour of their ways' (*Recollections of Sir Walter Scott*, London, 1838, p. 210). If exposure must needs come, let it be from an indifferent person. There is no lack of critics in this world; let them do their duty. *Magna est veritas*, to be sure, but let other people, not friends of the sinner, serve her cause in such an instance. A friend is not greater than the Truth, but all truths are not good to tell by all persons. There is nothing false nor perjured in a disapproving silence. Scott and Jeffrey, to be sure, were friends after Jeffrey had written a very snappish review of *Marmion*, but Scott had more than the common share of magnanimity. Had his clever Reviewer been either more courteous or silent, what would the cause of Truth have lost, and what a treasure he chose to imperil! I cannot believe that it is any critic's duty to hoist a friend and publicly birch him. This is far too Roman a virtue.

* * *

The converse of this rule in the Ethics of Reviewing is, that one should never criticise a personal enemy, in the field of the arts or letters. Who is so certain of his literary virtue that he can promise himself to be wholly free from a hostile personal *animus*? You persuade yourself that you are only discharging a public duty. Some day, perchance, your conscience will tell you that hatred, not fair indignation, was your motive. Or perhaps your conscience will never tell you so, and yet the charge may be true. In the days of flogging in the Navy, I think an honest boatswain's mate would have sought for a substitute when his personal foe was sentenced to the lash. A literary boatswain's

mate should be not less scrupulous. The malefactor deserves the cat no doubt, but another hand should lay it on. Will no one else lay it on? Then let the varlet 'scape whipping, or even swagger in dishonest laurels.

* * *

These rules may seem too lenient, but we do not live in a world where every man is bound to execute abstract justice. There is a certain scriptural caution against judging—a critic's profession is to judge, but no necessity is laid on him to judge everybody. I cannot see why he should not praise a friend, above all in cases where, perhaps, he himself is one of the very few practised and competent judges of that friend's special knowledge and performances. I see many reasons why he should no more trounce a friend than an enemy. Is it not plain that if all reviews were signed, this talk of 'log-rolling' would be deprived of any justification? I do not mean to say that there is no such thing as a tempered log-rolling. If I want a thoroughly fair estimate of the work of Jones, who writes statedly in the *Lounger*, and who is always reviewed in the *Lounger* the week that his new book is published, why, I go to some other organ of criticism. In the same way, if I wish to know what is a just estimate of Tomkins's work, I don't consult the *Street* (a journal of the Market and the State), to which Tomkins once was dear, but which now dislikes him for some reason. If all reviews were signed these little exhibitions of human nature could hardly be offered to an amused public. When the public saw Jones signing a number of articles in the *Lounger*, they would smile at the friendly punctuality with which his books are studied in that serial. When they observed that, as soon as Tompkins's signature disappeared from the *Street*, his name was never mentioned without insult in the *Street's* columns, they would draw their conclusions. Moreover, they would inevitably detect any mutual puffery, and Bavius and Maevius would not dare to 'ladle butter from their mutual tubs.' If reviews were signed, too, many literary squabbles would be prevented. How often one is blamed for a review written by some one else, of a book that one never even saw! But the wise world objects to signed reviews, and prefers all these misconceptions, and the possibility of all sorts of underground arts, to the opportunity of knowing whether any criticism is written by a reviewer worthy of attention. In no paper, probably, are its own contributors so severely handled as

in the only English literary journal which makes a rule that all reviews shall be signed.

* * *

The following lines, by M. K., exhibit the melancholy results of modern education on a sensitive but limited intellect:

EDUCATION'S MARTYR.

He loved peculiar plants and rare,
For any plant he did not care
  That he had seen before;
Primroses by the river's brim
Dicotyledons were to him,
  And they were nothing more.

The mighty cliffs we bade him scan,
He banned them for Laurentian,
  With sad, dejected mien.
'Than all this bleak Azoic rock,'
He said, 'I'd sooner have a block—
  Ah me!—of Pliocene!'

His eyes were bent upon the sand;
He owned the *scenery* was grand,
  In a reproachful voice.
But if a centipede he found,
He'd fall before it on the ground,
  And worship and rejoice.

We spoke of Poets dead and gone,
Of that Maeonian who shone
  O'er Hellas like a star.
We talked about the King of Men,—
'Observe,' he said, 'the force of κεν,
  And note the use of γαρ!'

Yes, all that has been or may be,
States, beauties, battles, land, and sea,
  The matin songs of larks,
With glacier, earthquake, avalanche,
To him are each a separate 'branch,'
  And stuff for scoring marks!

Ah! happier he who does not know
The power that makes the Planets go,
  The slave of Kepler's Laws;
Who finds not glands in joy or grief,
Nor, in the blossom and the leaf,
  Seeks for the secret Cause!

* * *

'Good morning, sir, indeed.' 'How do you do?' 'Very well, I thank you.' 'Give me some bread.' 'Great attraction!' 'Metropolitan Railway. English spoken here!' 'Soda water! Family's Hotel.' This is a lively English conversation between two English travellers, according to the *Figaro*. It has reminded me of a queer little book, the Ollendorf, or Baedeker's conversation book of Queen Elizabeth's time. The volume is entitled 'Familiar Dialogues. For the instruction of them that be desirous to learne to speake English, and perfectly to pronounce the same. Set forth by James Bellot, Gentleman, of Caen. Imprinted at London by Thomas Vautrollier, dwelling in the Blacke Friers. 1586.' The title-page also contains a French version of the title and the English version printed as it ought to be pronounced. This reads thus: 'Familier Deialogs for dé Instruction of dem dat by desireus tou lêrne tou spék Inglish,' and so forth. 'English as she was spoke,' three hundred years ago, by James Bellot, gentleman, of Caen, must have been rather on the famous Portuguese model. Here is 'the Gent's' conversation with his servant:

The Gent. Nedd, bring my sword,
My dagge,
My harkebuse,
Bring heather our horses,
My maule,
Mine asse,
Mine oxe,
My hogge,
My dogge,
My grayhunde.

A gent who travelled with an ox, a hog, and a dog, had forestalled the ingenious Ollendorf. 'Give me my pantables and my pompes, but where be my sockes?' cries the gent at his toilet. He appears to have a girl for valet. 'How should I be ready;

you brought me a smocke instead of my shirt, *Barbara?*' 'I forgot myselfe; holde, here is your shirt.' 'Now you are a good wenche.' *Autres temps, autres mœurs*,—these are rather Homeric. At breakfast the Gent has 'a quart of your best white wine, for it is wholesommer in the morning, and a role and some butter.' For this breakfast, for three, the score is eightpence. The Gent always says his prayers at considerable length. The author's friend recommends the book in a sonnet, which winds up by bidding French and English live friendly together.

Vivez en double paix, de vray amour munis:
Et le Monde vaincrez, Péché, Satan, la Mort.

Excellent counsel; would that we could abide by it!

* * *

That Poets should select themselves is a new principle in a volume of Elegant Extracts. It is the principle of Miss Gilder, the editor (is editress English?) of a curious interesting volume, *Representative Poems of Living Poets, English and American* (Messrs. Cassell). Miss Gilder wrote to the Singers and asked them to select themselves, and some coyly did, and some didn't. This, at least, is what one conjectures from the absence of Mr. Swinburne, Mr. William Morris, Mr. Lewis Morris, both Mr. Frederick and Mr. Ernest Myers, Mr. George Meredith, and several others, not unknown as English bards. There are eighteen British Minstrels, and sixty-two (62) American poets. Sixty-two is a great many! I have reckoned all the names I do not know as American, and that leaves England in the minority of forty-two. In the eighteen, however, are the names of Lord Tennyson, Mr. Browning, and Mr. Matthew Arnold. Lord Tennyson did not make his own selection, 'but it was generally known in the Family that certain ones . . . were Lord Tennyson's favourites.' Which are your favourite short poems in the Laureate's works? If I had to choose, I would take *The Lotos-Eaters*, *Ulysses*, *Mariana*, the lines to Virgil, the lines to Catullus, *Rizpah*, *Tears, idle Tears*, and all the other songs in the *Princess*, *Sir Galahad*—but one must stop somewhere, if there is to be room for all the other poets. In this volume we have the *Ballad of the Revenge*, *Boadicea*, *Come down, oh Maid*, and the *Daisy*. It is an unexpected selection, and occupies fourteen pages. Mr. Boker, on the other hand, has forty pages all to himself. I have still to make his acquaintance as a poet. Mr. Arnold only selects the

Forsaken Merman. One misses—what does one not miss? All his lyrics! Mr. Browning chooses *Saul*, *Clive*, *A Forgiveness*, *Abt Vogler*, *Caliban upon Setebos*. Surely *Andrea del Sarto*, *Garden Fancies*, *How they brought the Good News*, *Two in the Campagna*, and *Childe Roland*, and *Prospice*, and *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, and the *Grammarian's Funeral* could only have been omitted by their author. But when poets are so rich it must be very difficult for them to choose. Their admirers would have chosen more, and otherwise. Of Englishmen Mr. Locker and Mr. Dobson are very happy in their self-criticisms, but how could Mr. Dobson omit the *Song of Four Seasons*? In the American poetry one is most struck by the number, and sometimes by the energy and spirit of the narrative poems of action. But when Mr. Aldrich begins a sonnet,

When to soft Sleep we give ourselves away,

is one not reminded too much of a line in *In Memoriam*? Probably the poets did not correct the press. A misprint in his divine numbers makes a poet wild, and there will be a little excitement on this score among a race proverbially irritable. He who writes is a sufferer. 'Endure, my heart!' By the way, Sir Richard's remarks in *The Revenge* are quite in the spirit of the Second Mate's in a less well-known patriotic ballad, *The Mary Jane and the Belle Hélène.*

* * *

'Twas the *Mary Jane* off the coast of Spain,
  In the days of the old French war,
From her main-mast spied a ship of pride,
  A great French seventy-four.

Now the Captain, says he, 'Let us turn and flee,
  Or we never shall make the Nore,
For I stand on the poop of a merchant sloop
  And *she* is a seventy-four!'

But the bold Second Mate cries 'A fig for her weight,
  For I hold that man in scorn
As would turn his back on the whole French pack,
  And him an Englishman born!'

Observe the elliptic character of the seaman's language. But it is just the same *sentiment* as the Laureate's Sir Richard expresses

And Sir Richard said again we be all good Englishmen,
Let us bang those dogs of Seville, these children of the devil,

with more to the same effect. The *Mary Jane*, in the ballad, was more fortunate than the *Revenge*, but perhaps there is a touch of the mythical in both narratives.

So the *Mary Jane* off the coast of Spain,
In the days of the old French war,
Took the *Belle Hélène*, did the *Mary Jane*,
The great French seventy-four.

* * *

Is it a very bad habit to write one's name on the fly-leaf or even the title-page of one's books? M. Longpérier Grimoard says it is, and blames M. Payen de Fercourt for writing, in 1687, on a book given him by the great Bossuet, 'Ce livre a été donné par Monsieur Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet à moi, Payen de Fercourt.' What harm is there in that? Surely the inscription is now the chief merit of the book. Racine had this vile habit, and who would not like to pick up a volume on which he had indulged it? Lately I chanced to buy a copy of *Anacréon, Bion et Moschus* (the second edition, alas!) with Eisen's illustrations. The plates are a good deal worn, the yellow morocco is *fatigué*, but on the fly-leaf, in a manly hand, is written *John Wilkes*. It is the Anacreon of the author of the *Essay on Woman*, and I am glad that Wilkes, like Racine, wrote his name on his books.

ANDREW LANG.

The 'Donna.'

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The annual statement of account and some details about the work during the past year will be given in the January number.

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Allan Quatermain:

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF HIS

FURTHER ADVENTURES AND DISCOVERIES IN COMPANY WITH SIR HENRY CURTIS, BART., COMMANDER JOHN GOOD, R.N., AND ONE UMSLOPOGAAS.

BY H. RIDER HAGGARD, AUTHOR OF 'SHE,' 'KING SOLOMON'S MINES,' &c.

Ex Africa semper aliquid novi.

INTRODUCTION.

December 23.

'I HAVE just buried my boy, my poor handsome boy of whom I was so proud, and my heart is broken. It is very hard having only one son to lose him thus, but God's will be done. Who am I that I should complain? The great wheel of Fate rolls on like a Juggernaut, and crushes us all in turn, some soon, some late—it does not matter when, in the end it crushes us all. We do not prostrate ourselves before it like the poor Indians; we fly hither and thither—we cry for mercy; but it is of no use, the blind black Fate thunders on and in its season reduces us to powder.

'Poor Harry to go so soon! just when his life was opening to him. He was doing so well at the hospital, he had passed his last examination with honours, and I was proud of them, much prouder than he was, I think. And then he must needs go to that small-pox hospital. He wrote to me that he was not afraid of small-pox and wanted to gain the experience; and now the disease has killed him, and I, old and grey and withered, am left to mourn over

him, without a chick or child to comfort me. I might have saved him, too—I have money enough for both of us, and much more than enough—King Solomon's Mines provided me with that; but I said, "No, let the boy earn his living, let him labour that he may enjoy rest." But the rest has come to him before the labour. Oh, my boy, my boy!

'I am like the man in the Bible who laid up much goods and builded barns—goods for my boy and barns for him to store them in; and now his soul has been required of him, and I am left desolate. I would that it had been my soul and not my boy's!

'We buried him this afternoon under the shadow of the grey and ancient tower of the church of this village where my house is. It was a dreary December afternoon, and the sky was heavy with snow, but not much was falling. The coffin was put down by the grave, and a few big flakes lit upon it. They looked very white upon the black cloth! There was a little hitch about getting the coffin down into the grave—the necessary ropes had been forgotten; so we drew back from it, and waited in silence watching the big flakes fall gently one by one like heavenly benedictions, and melt in tears on Harry's pall. But that was not all. A robin redbreast came as bold as could be and lit upon the coffin and began to sing. And then I am afraid that I broke down, and so did Sir Henry Curtis, strong man though he is; and as for Captain Good, I saw him turn away too; even in my own distress I could not help noticing it.'

The above, signed 'Allan Quatermain,' is an extract from my diary written two years and more ago. I copy it down here because it seems to me that it is the fittest beginning to the history that I am about to write, if it please God to spare me to finish it. If not, well it does not matter. That extract was penned seven thousand miles or so from the spot where I now lie painfully and slowly writing this, with a pretty girl standing by my side fanning the flies from my august countenance. Harry is there and I am here, and yet somehow I cannot help feeling that I am not far off Harry.

When I was in England I used to live in a very fine house—at least I call it a fine house, speaking comparatively, and judging from the standard of the houses I have been accustomed to all my life in Africa—not five hundred yards from the old church where Harry is asleep, and thither I went after the funeral and ate some food; for it is no good starving even if one has just buried all one's

earthly hopes. But I could not eat much, and soon I took to walking, or rather limping—being permanently lame from the bite of a lion—up and down, up and down the oak-panelled vestibule; for there is a vestibule in my house in England. On all the four walls of this vestibule were placed pairs of horns—about a hundred pairs altogether, all of which I had shot myself. They are beautiful specimens, as I never keep any horns which are not in every way perfect, unless it may be now and again on account of the associations connected with them. In the centre of the room, however, over the wide fireplace, there was a clear space left on which I had fixed up all my rifles. Some of them I have had for forty years, old muzzle-loaders that nobody would look at nowadays. One was an elephant gun with strips of rimpi, or green hide, lashed round the stock and locks, such as used to be owned by the Dutchmen—a 'roer' they call it. That gun the Boer I bought it from many years ago, told me had been used by his father at the battle of the Blood River, just after Dingaan swept into Natal and slaughtered six hundred men, women, and children, so that the Boers named the place where they died 'Weenen,' or the 'Place of Weeping;' and so it is called to this day, and always will be called. And many an elephant have I shot with that old gun. She always took a handful of black powder and a three-ounce ball, and kicked like the very deuce.

Well, up and down I walked, staring at the guns and the horns which the guns had brought low; and as I did so there rose up in me a great craving:—I would go away from this place where I lived idly and at ease, back again to the wild land where I had spent my life, where I met my dear wife and poor Harry was born, and so many things, good, bad, and indifferent, had happened to me. The thirst for the wilderness was on me; I could tolerate this place no more; I would go and die as I had lived, among the wild game and the savages. Yes, as I walked, I began to long to see the moonlight gleaming silvery white over the wide veldt and mysterious sea of bush, and watch the long lines of game travelling down the ridges to the water. The ruling passion is strong in death, they say, and my heart was dead that night. But, independently of my trouble, no man who has for forty years lived the life I have, can with impunity go coop himself in this prim English country, with its trim hedgerows and cultivated fields, its stiff formal manners, and its well-dressed crowds. He begins to long —ah, how he longs!—for the keen breath of the desert air; he

dreams of the sight of Zulu impis breaking on their foes like surf upon the rocks, and his heart rises up in rebellion against the strict limits of the civilised life.

Ah! this civilisation, what does it all come to? For forty years and more I lived among savages, and studied them and their ways; and now for several years I have lived here in England, and have in my own stupid manner done my best to learn the ways of the children of light; and what have I found? A great gulf fixed? No, only a very little one, that a plain man's thought may spring across. I say that as the savage is, so is the white man, only the latter is more inventive, and possesses the faculty of combination; save and except also that the savage, as I have known him, is to a large extent free from the greed of money, which eats like a cancer into the heart of the white man. It is a depressing conclusion, but in all essentials the savage and the child of civilisation are identical. I daresay that the highly civilised lady reading this, will smile at an old fool of a hunter's simplicity when she thinks of her black bead-bedecked sister; and so will the superfine cultured idler scientifically eating a dinner at his club, the cost of which would keep a starving family for a week. And yet, my dear young lady, what are those pretty things round your own neck?—they have a strong family resemblance, especially when you wear that *very* low dress, to the savage woman's beads. Your habit of turning round and round to the sound of horns and tom-toms, your fondness for pigments and powders, the way in which you love to subjugate yourself to the rich warrior who has captured you in marriage, and the quickness with which your taste in feathered head-dresses varies,—all these things suggest touches of kinship; and remember that in the fundamental principles of your nature you are quite identical. As for you, sir, who also laugh, let some man come and strike you in the face whilst you are enjoying that marvellous-looking dish, and we shall soon see how much of the savage there is in *you*.

There, I might go on for ever, but what is the good? Civilisation is only savagery silver-gilt. A vainglory is it, and, like a Northern light, comes but to fade and leave the sky more dark. Out of the soil of barbarism it has grown like a tree, and, as I believe, into the soil like a tree it will once more, sooner or later, fall again, as the Egyptian civilisation fell, as the Hellenic civilisation fell, and as the Roman civilisation and many others of which the world has now lost count, fell also. Do not let me,

however, be understood as decrying our modern institutions, representing as they do the gathered experience of humanity applied for the good of all. Of course they have great advantages—hospitals, for instance; but then, remember, we breed the sickly people who fill them. In a savage land they do not exist. Besides, the question will arise. How many of these blessings are due to Christianity as distinct from civilisation? And so the balance sways and the story runs—here a gain, there a loss and Nature's great average struck across the two, whereof the sum total forms one of the factors in that mighty equation in which the result will equal the unknown quantity of her purpose.

I make no apology for this digression, especially as this is an introduction which all young people and those who never like to think (and it is a bad habit) will naturally skip. It seems to me very desirable that we should sometimes try to understand the limitations of our nature, so that we may not be carried away by the pride of knowledge. Man's cleverness is almost infinite, and stretches like an elastic band, but human nature is like an iron ring. You can go round and round it, you can polish it highly, you can even flatten it a little on one side, whereby you will make it bulge out on the other, but you will *never*, while the world endures and man is man, increase its total circumference. It is the one fixed unchangeable thing—fixed as the stars, more enduring than the mountains, as unalterable as the way of the Eternal. Human nature is God's kaleidoscope, and the little bits of coloured glass which represent our passions, hopes, fears, joys, aspirations towards good and evil and what not, are turned in His mighty hand as surely and as certainly as it turns the stars, and continually fall into new patterns and combinations. But the composing elements remain the same, nor will there be one more bit of coloured glass nor one less for ever and ever.

This being so, supposing for the sake of argument we divide ourselves into twenty parts, nineteen savage and one civilised, we must look to the nineteen savage portions of our nature, if we would really understand ourselves, and not to the twentieth, which, though so insignificant in reality, is spread all over the other nineteen, making them appear quite different from what they really are, as the blacking does a boot, or the veneer a table. It is on the nineteen rough serviceable savage portions that we fall back in emergencies, not on the polished but unsubstantial twentieth. Civilisation should wipe away our tears, and yet we weep and cannot be comforted. Warfare is abhorrent to her,

and yet we strike out for hearth and home, for honour and fair fame, and can glory in the blow. And so on, through everything.

So, when the heart is stricken, and the head is humbled in the dust, civilisation fails us utterly. Back, back we creep, and lay us like little children on the great breast of Nature, that she perchance may soothe us and make us forget, or at least rid remembrance of its sting. Who has not in his great grief felt a longing to look upon the outward features of the universal Mother; to lie on the mountains and watch the clouds drive across the sky and hear the rollers break in thunder on the shore, to let his poor struggling life mingle for a while in her life; to feel the slow beat of her eternal heart, and to forget his woes, and let his identity be swallowed in the vast imperceptibly moving energy of her of whom we are, from whom we came, and with whom we shall again be mingled, who gave us birth, and will in a day to come give us our burial also.

And so in my great grief, as I walked up and down the oak-panelled vestibule of my house there in Yorkshire, I longed once more to throw myself into the arms of Nature. Not the Nature which you know, the Nature that waves in well-kept woods and smiles out in corn-fields, but Nature as she was in the age when creation was complete, undefiled as yet by any human sinks of sweltering humanity. I would go again where the wild game was, back to the land whereof none know the history, back to the savages, whom I love, although some of them are almost as merciless as Political Economy. There, perhaps, I shall be able to learn to think of poor Harry lying in the churchyard, without feeling as though my heart would break in two.

And now there is an end of this egotistical talk, and there shall be no more of it. But if you whose eyes may perchance one day fall upon my written thoughts have got so far as this, I ask you to persevere, since what I have to tell you is not without its interest, and it has never been told before, nor will again.]

CHAPTER I.

THE CONSUL'S YARN.

A WEEK had passed since the funeral of my poor boy Harry, and one evening I was in my room walking up and down and thinking, when there was a ring at the outer door. Going down the steps

I opened it myself, and in came my old friends Sir Henry Curtis and Captain John Good, R.N. They entered the vestibule and sat themselves down before the wide hearth, where I remember a particularly good fire of logs was burning.

'It is very kind of you to come round,' I said, by way of making a remark; 'it must have been heavy walking in the snow.'

They said nothing, but Sir Henry slowly filled his pipe and lit it with a burning ember. As he leant forward to do so the fire got hold of a gassy bit of pine and flared up brightly, throwing the whole scene into strong relief, and I thought what a splendid-looking man he is. Calm, powerful face, clear-cut features, large grey eyes, yellow beard and hair—altogether a magnificent specimen of the higher type of humanity. Nor did his form belie his face. I have never seen wider shoulders or a deeper chest. Indeed, Sir Henry's girth is so great that, though he is six foot two high, he does not strike one as a tall man. As I looked at him I could not help thinking what a curious contrast my little dried-up self presented to his grand face and form. Imagine to yourself a small, withered, yellow-faced man of sixty-three, with thin hands, large brown eyes, a head of grizzled hair cut short and standing up like a half-worn scrubbing-brush—total weight in my clothes, nine stone six—and you will get a very fair idea of Allan Quatermain, commonly called Hunter Quatermain, or by the natives 'Macumazahn'—anglice, he who keeps a bright look-out at night, or, in vulgar English, a sharp fellow who is not to be taken in.

Then there was Good, who is not like either of us, being short, dark, stout—*very* stout—with twinkling black eyes, in one of which an eyeglass is everlastingly fixed. I say stout, but it is a mild term: I regret to state that of late years Good has been running to stomach in a most disgraceful way. Sir Henry tells him that it comes from idleness and over-feeding, and Good does not like it at all, though he cannot deny it.

We sat for a while, and then I got a match and lit the lamp that stood ready on the table, for the half-light began to grow dreary, as it is apt to do when one has just one short week ago buried the hope of one's life. Next, I opened a cupboard in the wainscoting and got a bottle of whisky and some tumblers and water. I always like to do these things for myself: it is irritating to me to have somebody continually at my elbow, as though I were an eighteen-month-old baby. All this while Curtis and

Good had been silent, feeling, I suppose, that they had nothing to say that could do me any good, and content to give me the comfort of their presence and silent sympathy; for it was only their second visit since the funeral. And it is, by the way, from the fact of the *presence* of others that we really derive support in our dark hours of grief, and not from their talk, which often only serves to irritate us. Before a bad storm the game always herd together, but they cease their calling.

They sat and smoked and drank whisky and water, and I stood by the fire also smoking and looking at them.

At last I spoke. 'Old friends,' I said, 'how long is it since we got back from Kukuanaland?'

'Three years,' said Good. 'Why do you ask?'

'I ask because I think that I have had a long enough spell of civilisation. I am going back to the veldt.'

Sir Henry laid his head back in his armchair and laughed one of his deep laughs. 'How very odd,' he said, 'eh, Good?'

Good beamed at me mysteriously through his eyeglass and murmured, 'Yes, odd—very odd.'

'I don't quite understand,' said I, looking from one to the other, for I dislike mysteries.

'Don't you, old fellow?' said Sir Henry; 'then I will explain. As Good and I were walking up here we had a talk.'

'If Good was there you probably did,' I put in sarcastically, for Good is a great hand at talking. 'And what may it have been about?'

'What do you think?' asked Sir Henry.

I shook my head. It was not likely that I should know what Good might be talking about; he talks about so many things.

'Well, it was about a little plan that I have formed—namely, that if you were agreeable we should pack up our traps and go off to Africa on another expedition.'

I fairly jumped at his words. 'You don't say so!' I said.

'Yes I do, though, and so does Good; don't you, Good?'

'Rather,' said that gentleman.

'Listen, old fellow,' went on Sir Henry, with considerable animation of manner. 'I'm tired of it too, dead-tired of doing nothing, except play the squire in a country that is sick of squires. For a year or more I have been getting as restless as an old elephant who scents danger. I am always dreaming of Kukuanaland and Gagool and King Solomon's Mines. I can assure you I have become the victim of an almost unaccountable

craving. I am sick of shooting pheasants and partridges, and want to have a go at some large game again. There, you know the feeling—when one has once tasted brandy and water, milk becomes insipid to the palate. That year we spent together up in Kukuanaland seems to me worth all the other years of my life put together. I daresay that I am a fool for my pains, but I can't help it; I long to go, and, what is more, I mean to go.' He paused and then went on again. 'And, after all, why should I not go? I have no wife or parent, no chick or child to keep me. If anything happens to me the baronetcy will go to my brother George and his boy, as it would ultimately do in any case. I am of no importance to any one.'

'Ah,' I said, 'I thought you would come to that sooner or later. And now, Good, what is your reason for wanting to trek; have you got one?'

'I have,' said Good, solemnly. 'I never do anything without a reason; and it isn't a lady—at least, if it is, it's several.'

I looked at him again. Good is so overpoweringly frivolous. 'What is it?' I said.

'Well, if you really want to know, though I'd rather not speak of a delicate and strictly personal matter, I'll tell you: I'm getting too fat.'

'Shut up, Good!' said Sir Henry. 'And now, Quatermain, tell us, where do you propose going to?'

I lit my pipe, which had gone out, before answering.

'Have you people ever heard of Mt. Kenia?' I asked.

'Don't know the place,' said Good.

'Did you ever hear of the Island of Lamu?' I asked again.

'No. Stop, though—isn't it a place about 300 miles north of Zanzibar?'

'Yes. Now listen. What I have to propose is this. That we go to Lamu and thence make our way about 250 miles inland to Mt. Kenia; from Mt. Kenia on inland to Mt. Lekakisera, another 200 miles, or thereabouts, beyond which no white man has to the best of my belief ever been; and then, if we get so far, right on into the unknown interior. What do you say to that, my hearties?'

'It's a big order,' said Sir Henry, reflectively.

'You are right,' I answered, 'it is; but I take it that we are all three of us in search of a big order. We want a change of scene, and we are likely to get one—a thorough change. All my life I have longed to visit those parts, and I mean to do it

before I die. My poor boy's death has broken the last link between me and civilisation, and I'm off to my native wilds. And now I'll tell you another thing, and that is, that for years and years I have heard rumours of a great white race which is supposed to have its home somewhere up in this direction, and I have a mind to see if there is any truth in them. If you fellows like to come, well and good; if not, I'll go alone.'

'I'm your man, though I don't believe in your white race,' said Sir Henry Curtis, rising and placing his arm upon my shoulder.

'Ditto,' remarked Good; 'I'll go into training at once. By all means let's go to Mt. Kenia and the other place with an unpronounceable name, and look for a white race that does not exist. It's all one to me.'

'When do you propose to start?' asked Sir Henry.

'This day month,' I answered, by the British India steamboat; and don't you be so certain that things don't exist because you do not happen to hear of them. Remember King Solomon's Mines.'

. . . . . .

Some fourteen weeks or so had passed since the date of this conversation, and this history continues on its way under very different surroundings.

After much deliberation and inquiry we came to the conclusion that our best starting-point for Mt. Kenia would be from the neighbourhood of the mouth of the Tana River, and not from Mombasa, a place over 100 miles nearer Zanzibar. This conclusion we arrived at from information given to us by a German trader whom we met upon the steamer at Aden. I think that he was the dirtiest German I ever knew; but he was a good fellow, and gave us a great deal of valuable information. 'Lamu,' said he, 'you goes to Lamu—oh ze beautiful place!' and he turned up his fat face and beamed with mild rapture, 'One year and a half I live there and never change my shirt—never at all.'

And so it came to pass that on arriving at the island we disembarked with all our goods and chattels, and, not knowing where to go, marched boldly up to the house of Her Majesty's Consul, where we were most hospitably received.

Lamu is a very curious place, but the things which stand out most clearly in my memory in connection with it are its exceeding dirtiness and its smells. These last are simply awful. Just below the Consulate is the beach, or rather a mud bank that is called a beach. It is left quite bare at low tide, and serves as a

repository for all the filth, offal, and refuse of the town. Here it is, too, that the women come to bury cocoanuts in the mud, leaving them there till the outer husk is quite rotten, when they dig them up again and use the fibres to make mats with, and for various other purposes. As this process has been going on for generations, the condition of the beach can be better imagined than described. I have smelt many evil odours in the course of my life, but the concentrated essence of stench which arose from that beach at Lamu as we sat in the moonlight night—not under, but *on* our friend the Consul's hospitable roof—and sniffed it, makes the remembrance of them very poor and faint. No wonder people get fever at Lamu. And yet the place was not without a certain quaintness and charm of its own, though possibly—indeed probably—it was one which would quickly pall.

'Well, where are you gentlemen steering for?' asked our friend the hospitable Consul, as we smoked our pipes after dinner.

'We propose to go to Mt. Kenia and then on to Mt. Lekakisera,' answered Sir Henry. 'Quatermain has got hold of some yarn about there being a white race up in the unknown territories beyond.'

The Consul looked interested, and answered that he had heard something of that, too.

'What have you heard?' I asked.

'Oh, not much. All I know about it is that a year or so ago I got a letter from Mackenzie, the Scotch missionary, whose station, "The Highlands," is placed at the highest navigable point of the Tana River, in which he said something about it.'

'Have you the letter?' I asked.

'No, I destroyed it; but I remember that he said that a man had arrived at his station who declared that two months' journey beyond Mt. Lekakisera, which no white man has yet visited—at least, so far as I know—he found a lake called Laga, and that then he went off to the north-east, a month's journey, over desert and thorn veldt and great mountains, till he came to a country where the people were white and live in stone houses. Here he was hospitably entertained for a while, till at last the priests of the country set it about that he was a devil, and the people drove him away, and he journeyed for eight months and reached Mackenzie's place, as I heard, dying. That's all I know; and if you ask me, I believe that it is a lie; but if you want to find out more about it, you had better go up the Tana to Mackenzie's place and ask him for information.'

Sir Henry and I looked at each other. Here was something tangible.

'I think that we will go to Mr. Mackenzie's,' I said.

'Well,' answered the Consul, 'that is your best way, but I warn you that you are likely to have a rough journey, for I hear that the Masai are about, and, as you know, they are not pleasant customers. Your best plan will be to choose a few picked men for personal servants and hunters, and to hire bearers from village to village. It will give you an infinity of trouble, but perhaps on the whole it will prove a cheaper and more advantageous course than engaging a caravan, and you will be less liable to desertion.'

Fortunately there were at Lamu at this time a party of Wakwafi Askari (soldiers). The Wakwafi, who are a cross between the Masai and the Wataveta, are a fine manly race, possessing many of the good qualities of the Zulu, and a greater capacity for civilisation. They are also great hunters. As it happened, these particular men had recently been a long trip with an Englishman named Jutson, who had started for Mombasa, a port about 150 miles below Lamu, and journeyed right round Kilimanjairo, one of the highest known mountains in Africa. Poor fellow, he had died of fever when on his return journey, and within a day's march of Mombasa. It does seem hard that he should have gone off thus when within a few hours of safety, and after having survived so many perils, but so it was. His hunters buried him, and then came on to Lamu in a dhow. Our friend the Consul suggested to us that we had better try and hire these men, and accordingly on the following morning we started to interview the party, accompanied by an interpreter.

In due course we found them in a mud hut on the outskirts of the town. Three of the men were sitting outside the hut, and fine frank-looking fellows they were, having a more or less civilised appearance. To them we cautiously opened the object of our visit, at first with very scant success. They declared that they could not entertain any such idea, that they were worn and weary with long travelling, and that their hearts were sore at the loss of their master. They meant to go back to their homes and rest awhile. This did not sound very promising, so by way of effecting a diversion I asked where the remainder of them were. I was told there were six, and I saw but three. One of the men said that they slept in the hut, and were yet resting after their labours—'sleep weighed down their eyelids, and

sorrow made their hearts as lead: it was best to sleep, for with sleep came forgetfulness. But the men should be awakened.'

Presently they came out of the hut, yawning—the first two men being evidently of the same race and style as those already before us; but the appearance of the third and last nearly made me jump out of my skin. He was a very tall, broad man, quite six foot three, I should say, but gaunt, with lean, wiry-looking limbs. My first glance at him told me that he was no Wakwafi: he was a pure bred Zulu. He came out with his thin aristocratic-looking hand placed before his face to hide a yawn, so I could only see that he was a 'Keshla,' or ringed man,[1] and that he had a great three-cornered hole in his forehead. In another second he removed his hand, revealing a powerful-looking Zulu face, with a humorous mouth, a short woolly beard, tinged with grey, and a pair of brown eyes keen as hawks. I knew my man at once, although I had not seen him for twelve years. 'How do you do, Umslopogaas?' I said quietly in Zulu.

The tall man (who among his own people was commonly known as the 'Woodpecker,' and also as the 'Slaughterer') started, and almost let the long-handled battle-axe he held in his hand fall in his astonishment. Next second he had recognised me, and was saluting me in an outburst of sonorous language which made his companions the Wakwafi stare.

'Koos' (chief), he began, 'Koos-y-Pagate! Koos-y-umcool! (Chief from of old—mighty chief) Koos! Baba! (father) Macumazahn, old hunter, slayer of elephant, eater up of lions, clever one! watchful one! brave one! quick one! whose shot never misses, who strikes straight home, who grasps a hand and holds it to the death (i.e. is a true friend) Koos! Baba! Wise is the voice of our people that says, "Mountain never meets with mountain, but at daybreak or at even man shall meet again with man." Behold! a messenger came up from Natal, "Macumazahn is dead!" cried he. "The land knows Macumazahn no more." That is years ago. And now, behold, now in this strange place of stinks I find Macumazahn, my friend. There is no room for doubt, the brush of the old jackal has gone a little grey; but is not his eye as keen, and are not his teeth as sharp? Ha! ha! Macumazahn, mindest thou how thou didst

[1] Among the Zulus a man assumes the ring, which is made of a species of black gum twisted in with the hair, and polished a brilliant black, when he has reached a certain dignity and age, or is the husband of a sufficient number of wives. Till he is in a position to wear a ring he is looked on as a boy, though he may be thirty-five years of age, or even more.—A. Q.

plant the ball in the eye of the charging buffalo—mindest thou—'

I had let him run on thus because I saw that his enthusiasm was producing a marked effect upon the minds of the five Wakwafi, who appeared to understand something of his talk; but now I thought it time to put a stop to it, for there is nothing that I hate so much as this Zulu system of extravagant praising—'bongering' as they call it. 'Silence,' I said. 'Has all thy noisy talk been stopped up since last I saw thee that it breaks out thus, and sweeps us away? What doest thou here with these men—thou whom I left a chief in Zululand? How is it that thou art far from thine own place, and gathered together with strangers?

Umslopogaas leant himself upon the head of his long battle-axe (which was nothing else but a pole-axe, with a beautiful handle of rhinoceros horn), and his grim face grew sad.

'My Father,' he answered, 'I have a word to tell thee, but I cannot speak it before these low people (umfagozana),' and he glanced at the Wakwafi Askari; 'it is for thine own ear. My Father, this will I say,' and here his face grew stern again, 'a woman betrayed me to the death, and covered my name with shame—ay, my own wife, a round-faced girl, betrayed me; but I escaped from death; ay, I broke from the very hands of those who came to slay me. I struck but three blows with this mine axe Inkosikaas—surely my Father will remember it—one to the right, one to the left, and one in front, and yet I left three men dead. And then I fled, and, as my Father knows, even now that I am old, my feet are as the feet of the Sassaby,[1] and there breathes not the man who, by running, can touch me again when once I have bounded from his side. On I sped, and after me came the messengers of death, and their voice was as the voice of dogs that hunt. From my own kraal I flew, and, as I passed, she who had betrayed me was drawing water from the spring. I fleeted by her like the shadow of death, and as I went I smote with mine axe, and lo! her head fell: it fell into the water pan. Then I fled north. Day after day I journeyed on; for three moons I journeyed, resting not, stopping not, but running on towards forgetfulness, till I met the party of the white hunter who is now dead, and am come hither with his servants. And nought have I brought with me. I who was high-born, ay, of the blood of Chaka, the great king—a chief, and a captain of the

[1] One of the fleetest of the African antelopes.

regiment of the Nkomabakosi—am a wanderer in strange places, a man without a kraal. Nought have I brought save this mine axe; of all my belongings this remains alone. They have divided my cattle; they have taken my wives; and my children know my face no more. Yet with this axe'—and he swung the formidable weapon round his head, making the air hiss as he clove it—'will I carve another path to fortune. I have spoken.'

I shook my head at him. 'Umslopogaas,' I said, 'I know thee from of old. Ever ambitious, ever plotting to be great, I fear me that thou hast overreached thyself at last. Years ago, when thou wouldst have plotted against Cetywayo, son of Panda, I warned thee, and thou didst listen. But now, when I was not by thee to stay thy hand, thou hast dug a pit for thine own feet to fall in. Is it not so? But what is done is done. Who can make the dead tree green, or gaze again upon last year's light? Who can recall the spoken word, or bring back the spirit of the fallen? That which Time swallows comes not up again. Let it be forgotten!

'And now, behold, Umslopogaas, I know thee for a great warrior and a brave man, faithful to the death. Even in Zululand, where all the men are brave, they called thee the "Slaughterer," and at night told stories round the fire of thy strength and deeds. Hear me now. Thou seest this great man, my friend'—and I pointed to Sir Henry; 'he also is a warrior as great as thou, and strong as thou art he could throw thee over his shoulder. Incubu is his name. And thou seest this one also; him with the round stomach, the shining eye, and the pleasant face. Bougwan (glass eye) is his name, and a good man is he and a true, being of a curious people who pass their life upon the water, and live in floating kraals.

'Well, we three whom thou seest would travel inland, past Dongo Egere, the great white mountain (Mt. Kenia), and far into the unknown beyond. We know not what we shall find there; we go to hunt and seek adventures, and new places, being tired of sitting still, with the same old things around us. Wilt thou come with us? To thee shall be given command of all our servants; but what shall befall thee, that I know not. Once before we three journeyed thus, in search of adventure, and we took with us a man such as thou—one Umbopa; and, behold, we left him the king of a great country, with twenty Impis (regiments), each of 3,000 plumed warriors, waiting on his word. How it shall go with thee, I know not; mayhap death awaits

thee and us. Wilt thou throw thyself to Fortune and come, or fearest thou, Umslopogaas?'

The great man smiled. 'Thou art not altogether right, Macumazahn,' he said; 'I have plotted in my time, but it was not ambition that led me to my fall; but, shame on me that I should have to say it, a fair woman's face. Let it pass. So we are going to see something like the old times again, Macumazahn, when we fought and hunted in Zululand? Ay, I will come. Come life, come death, what care I, so that the blows fall fast and the blood runs red? I grow old, I grow old, and I have not fought enough! And yet am I a warrior among warriors; see my scars'—and he pointed to countless cicatrices, stabs and cuts, that marked the skin of his chest and legs and arms. 'See the hole in my head; the brains gushed out therefrom, yet did I slay him who smote, and live. Knowest thou how many men I have slain, in fair hand-to-hand combat, Macumazahn? See, here is the tale of them'—and he pointed to long rows of niches cut in the rhinoceros-horn handle of his axe. 'Number them, Macumazahn—one hundred and three—and I have never counted but those whom I have ripped open,[1] nor have I reckoned those whom another man had struck.'

'Be silent,' I said, for I saw that he was getting the blood-fever on him; 'be silent; well art thou called the "Slaughterer." We would not hear of thy deeds of blood. Remember, if thou comest with us, we fight not save in self-defence. Listen, we need servants. These men,' and I pointed to the Wakwafi, who had retired a little way during our 'indaba' (talk), 'say they will not come.'

'Will not come!' shouted Umslopogaas; 'where is the dog who says he will not come when my Father orders? Here, thou'—and with a single bound he sprang upon the Wakwafi with whom I had first spoken, and, seizing him by the arm, dragged him towards us. 'Thou dog!' he said, giving the terrified man a shake, 'didst thou say that thou wouldst not go with my Father? Say it once more and I will choke thee'—and his long fingers closed round his throat as he said it—'thee, and those with thee. Hast thou forgotten how I served thy brother?'

'Nay, we will come with the white man,' gasped the man.

'White man!' went on Umslopogaas, in simulated fury, which

[1] Alluding to the Zulu custom of opening the stomach of a dead foe. They have a superstition that, if this is not done, as the body of their enemy swells up so will the bodies of those who killed him swell up.

a very little provocation would have made real enough; 'of whom speakest thou, insolent dog?'

'Nay, we will go with the great chief.'

'So!' said Umslopogaas, in a quiet voice, as he suddenly released his hold, so that the man fell backward. 'I thought you would.'

'That man Umslopogaas seems to have a curious *moral* ascendency over his companions,' Good afterwards remarked thoughtfully.

CHAPTER II.

THE BLACK HAND.

In due course we left Lamu, and ten days afterwards we found ourselves at a spot called Charra, on the Tana River, having gone through many adventures which need not be recorded here. Amongst other things we visited a ruined city, of which there are many on this coast, and which must once, to judge from their extent and the numerous remains of mosques and stone houses, have been very populous places. These ruined cities are immeasurably ancient, having, I believe, been places of wealth and importance as far back as the Old Testament times, when they were centres of trade with India and elsewhere. But their glory has departed now—the slave trade has finished them—and where once wealthy merchants from all parts of the then civilised world stood and bargained in the crowded market-places, the lion holds his court at night, and instead of the chattering of slaves and the eager voices of the bidders, his awful note goes echoing down the ruined corridors. At this particular place we discovered on a mound, covered up with rank growth and rubbish, two of the most beautiful stone doorways that it is possible to conceive. The carving on them was simply exquisite, and I only regret that we had no means of getting them away. No doubt they had once been the entrances to a palace, of which, however, no traces were now to be seen, though probably its ruins lay under the rising mound.

Gone! quite gone! the way that everything must go. Like the nobles and the ladies who lived within their gates, these cities have had their day, and now they are as Babylon and Nineveh, and as London and Paris will one day be. Nothing may endure. That is the inexorable law. Men and women, empires and cities, thrones, principalities, and powers, mountains, rivers, and

unfathomed seas, worlds, spaces, and universes, all have their day, and all must go. In this ruined and forgotten place the moralist may behold a symbol of the universal destiny. For this system of ours allows no room for standing still—nothing can loiter on the road and check the progress of things upwards towards Life, or the rush of things downwards towards Death. The stern policeman Fate moves us and them on, on, uphill and downhill and across the level; there is no resting-place for the weary feet, till at last the abyss swallows us, and from the shores of the Transitory we are hurled into the sea of the Eternal.

At Charra we had a violent quarrel with the headman of the bearers we had hired to go as far as this, and who now wished to extort large extra payment from us. In the result he threatened to set the Masai—about whom more anon—on to us. That night he, with all our hired bearers, bolted, stealing most of the goods which had been entrusted to them to carry. Luckily, however, they had not happened to steal our rifles, ammunition, and personal effects; not because of any delicacy of feeling on their part, but owing to the fact that they chanced to be in the charge of the five Wakwafis. After that, it was clear to us that we had had enough of caravans and of bearers. Indeed, we had not much left for a caravan to carry. And yet, how were we to get on?

It was Good who solved the question. 'Here is water,' he said, pointing to the Tana River; 'and yesterday I saw a party of natives hunting hippopotami in canoes. I understand that Mr. Mackenzie's mission station is on the Tana River. Why not get into canoes and paddle up to it?'

This brilliant suggestion was, needless to say, received with acclamation; and I instantly set to work to buy suitable canoes from the surrounding natives. I succeeded after a delay of three days in obtaining two large ones, each hollowed out of a single log of some light wood, and capable of holding six people and baggage. For these two canoes we had to pay nearly all our remaining cloth, and also many other articles.

On the day following our purchase of the two canoes we effected a start. In the first canoe were Good, Sir Henry, and three of our Wakwafi followers; in the second myself, Umslopogaas, and the other two Wakwafis. As our course lay up stream, we had to keep four paddles at work in each canoe, which meant that the whole lot of us, except Good, had to row away like galley-slaves; and very exhausting work it was. I say, except Good, for, of course, the moment that Good got into a boat his foot was on

his native heath, and he took command of the party. And oh, my word, didn't he work us! On shore Good is a gentle, mild-mannered man, and given to jocosity; but, as we found to our cost, Good in a boat was a perfect demon. To begin with, he knew all about it, and we didn't. On all nautical subjects, from the torpedo fittings of a man-of-war down to the best way of handling the paddle of an African canoe, he was a perfect mine of information, which, to say the least of it, we were not. Also his ideas of discipline were of the sternest, and, in short, he came the royal naval officer over us pretty considerably, and paid us out amply for all the chaff we were wont to treat him to on land; but, on the other hand, I am bound to say that he managed the boats admirably.

After the first day Good succeeded, with the help of some cloth and a couple of poles, in rigging up a sail in each canoe, which lightened our labours not a little. But the current ran very strong against us, and at the best we were not able to make more than twenty miles a day. Our plan was to start at dawn, and paddle along till about half-past ten, by which time the sun got too hot to allow of further exertion. Then we moored our canoes to the bank, and ate our frugal meal; after which we slept or otherwise amused ourselves till about three o'clock, when we again started, and rowed till within an hour of sundown, when we called a halt for the night. On landing in the evening, Good would at once set to work, with the help of the Askari, to build a little 'scherm,' or small enclosure, fenced with thorn bushes, and to light a fire. I, with Sir Henry and Umslopogaas, would go out to shoot something for the pot. Generally this was an easy task, for all sorts of game abounded on the banks of the Tana. One night Sir Henry shot a young cow-giraffe, of which the marrow-bones were excellent; on another I got a couple of waterbuck right and left; and once, to his own intense satisfaction, Umslopogaas (who, like most Zulus, was a vile shot with a rifle) managed to kill a fine fat eland with a Martini I had lent him. Sometimes we varied our food by shooting some guinea-fowl, or bush-bustard (paau)—both of which were numerous—with a shot-gun, or by catching a supply of beautiful yellow fish, with which the waters of the Tana swarmed, and which form, I believe, one of the chief food-supplies of the crocodiles.

Three days after our start an ominous incident occurred. We were just drawing in to the bank to make our camp as usual for the night, when we caught sight of a figure standing on a little

knoll not forty yards away, and intently watching our approach. One glance was sufficient—although I was personally unacquainted with the tribe—to tell me that he was a Masai Elmoran, or young warrior. Indeed, had I had any doubts, they would have quickly been dispelled by the terrified ejaculation of '*Masài!*' that burst simultaneously from the lips of our Wakwafi followers, who are, as I think I have said, themselves bastard Masai.

And what a figure he presented as he stood there in his savage war-gear! Accustomed as I have been to savages all my life, I do not think that I have ever before seen anything quite so ferocious or awe-inspiring. To begin with, the man was enormously tall, quite as tall as Umslopogaas, I should say, and beautifully, though somewhat slightly, shaped; but with the face of a devil. In his right hand he held a spear about five and a half feet long, the blade being two and a half feet in length, by nearly three inches in width, and having an iron spike at the end of the handle that measured more than a foot. On his left arm was a large and well-made elliptical shield of buffalo hide, on which were painted strange heraldic-looking devices. On his shoulders was a huge cape of hawk's feathers, and round his neck was a 'naibere,' or strip of cotton, about seventeen feet long, by one and a half broad, with a stripe of colour running down the middle of it. The tanned goatskin robe, which formed his ordinary attire in times of peace, was tied lightly round his waist, so as to serve the purposes of a belt, and through it were stuck, on the right and left sides respectively, his short pear-shaped sime, or sword, which is made of a single piece of steel, and carried in a wooden sheath, and an enormous knobkerrie. But perhaps the most remarkable feature of his attire consisted of a headdress of ostrich-feathers, which was fixed on the chin, and passed in front of the ears to the forehead, and, being shaped like an ellipse, completely framed the face, so that the diabolical countenance appeared to project from a sort of feather fire-screen. Round the ankles he wore black fringes of hair, and, projecting from the upper portion of the calves, to which they were attached, were long spurs like spikes, from which flowed down tufts of the beautiful black and waving hair of the Colobus monkey. Such was the elaborate array of the Masai Elmoran who stood watching the approach of our two canoes, but it is one which, to be appreciated, must be seen; only those who see it do not often live to describe it. Of course I could not make out all these details of his full dress on the occasion of this my first introduction, being,

indeed, amply taken up with the consideration of the general effect, but I had plenty of subsequent opportunities of becoming acquainted with the items that went to make it up.

Whilst we were hesitating what to do, the Masai warrior drew himself up in a dignified fashion, shook his huge spear at us, and, turning, vanished on the further side of the slope.

'Hulloa!' holloaed Sir Henry from the other boat; 'our friend the caravan leader has been as good as his word, and set the Masai after us. Do you think it will be safe to go ashore?'

I did not think it would be at all safe; but, on the other hand, we had no means of cooking in the canoes, and nothing that we could eat raw, so it was difficult to know what to do. At last Umslopogaas simplified matters by volunteering to go and reconnoitre, which he did, creeping off into the bush like a snake, whilst we hung off in the stream waiting for him. In half an hour he returned, and told us that there was not a Masai to be seen anywhere about, but that he had discovered a spot where they had recently been encamped, and that from various indications he judged that they must have moved on an hour or so before; the man we saw having no doubt been left to report upon our movements.

Thereupon we landed; and, having posted a sentry, proceeded to cook and eat our evening meal. This done, we took the situation into our serious consideration. Of course, it was possible that the apparition of the Masai warrior had nothing to do with us, that he was merely one of a band bent upon some marauding and murdering expedition against another tribe. Our friend the Consul had told us that such expeditions were about. But when we recalled the threat of the caravan leader, and reflected on the ominous way in which the warrior had shaken his spear at us, this did not appear very probable. On the contrary, what did seem probable was that the party was after us and awaiting a favourable opportunity to attack us. This being so, there were two things that we could do—one of which was to go on, and the other to go back. The latter idea was, however, rejected at once, it being obvious that we should encounter as many dangers in retreat as in advance; and, besides, we had made up our minds to journey onwards at any price. Under these circumstances, however, we did not consider it safe to sleep ashore, so we got into our canoes, and, paddling out into the middle of the stream, which was not very wide here, managed to anchor them by means of big stones fastened to ropes made of cocoanut-fibre, of which there were several fathoms in each canoe.

Here the musquitoes nearly ate us up alive, and this, combined with anxiety as to our position, effectually prevented me from sleeping as the others were doing, notwithstanding the attacks of the aforesaid Tana musquitoes. And so I lay awake, smoking and reflecting on many things, but, being of a practical turn of mind, chiefly on how we were to give those Masai villains the slip. It was a beautiful moonlight night, and, notwithstanding the musquitoes, and the great risk we were running from fever from sleeping in such a spot, and forgetting that I had the cramp very badly in my right leg from squatting in a constrained position in the canoe, and that the Wakwafi who was sleeping by me smelt horrible, I really began to enjoy myself. The moonbeams played upon the surface of the running water that speeded unceasingly past us towards the sea, like men's lives towards the grave, till it glittered like a wide sheet of silver, that is in the open where the trees threw no shadows. Near the banks, however, it was very dark, and the night wind sighed sadly in the reeds. To our left, on the further side of the river, was a little sandy bay which was clear of trees, and here I could make out the forms of numerous antelopes advancing to the water, till suddenly there came an ominous roar, whereupon they all made off hurriedly. Then after a pause I caught sight of the massive form of His Majesty the Lion, coming down to drink his fill after meat. Presently he moved on, then came a crashing of the reeds about fifty yards above us, and a few minutes later a huge black mass rose out of the water, about twenty yards from me, and snorted. It was the head of a hippopotamus. Down it went without a sound, only to rise again within five yards of where I sat. This was decidedly too near to be comfortable, more especially as the hippopotamus was evidently animated by intense curiosity to know what on earth our canoes were. He opened his great mouth, to yawn I suppose, and gave me an excellent view of his ivories; and I could not help reflecting how easily he could crunch up our frail canoe with a single bite. Indeed, I had half a mind to give him a ball from my eight bore, but on reflection determined to let him alone unless he actually made for the boat. Presently he sank again as noiselessly as before, and I saw no more of him. Just then, on looking towards the bank on our right, I fancied that I caught sight of a dark figure flitting between the tree trunks. I have very keen sight, and I was almost sure that I saw something, but whether it was bird, beast, or man I could not say. At the moment, however, a dark cloud passed over the moon, and I saw no more of it.

Just then, too, although all the other sounds of the forest had ceased, a species of horned owl with which I was well acquainted began to hoot with great persistency. After that, save for the rustling of trees and reeds when the wind caught them, there was complete silence.

But somehow, in the most unaccountable way, I had suddenly become nervous. There was no particular reason why I should be, beyond the ordinary reasons which surround the Central African traveller, and yet I undoubtedly was. If there is one thing more than another of which I have the most complete and entire scorn and disbelief, it is of presentiments, and yet here I was all of a sudden filled with, and possessed by a most undoubted presentiment of approaching evil. I would not give way to it, however, although I felt the cold perspiration stand out upon my forehead. I would not arouse the others. Worse and worse I grew, my pulse fluttered like a dying man's, my nerves thrilled with the horrible sense of impotent terror which anybody who is subject to nightmare will be familiar with, but still my will triumphed over my fears, and I lay quiet (for I was half sitting, half lying, in the bow of the canoe), only turning my face so as to command a view of Umslopogaas and the two Wakwafi who were sleeping alongside of and beyond me.

In the distance I heard a hippopotamus splash faintly, then the owl hooted again in a kind of unnatural screaming note,[1] and the wind began to moan plaintively through the trees, making a heart-chilling music. Above was the black bosom of the cloud, and beneath me swept the black flood of the water, and I felt as though I and Death were utterly alone between them. It was very desolate.

Suddenly my blood seemed to freeze in my veins, and my heart to stand still. Was it fancy, or were we moving? I turned my eyes to look for the other canoe which should be alongside of us. I could not see it, but instead I saw a lean and clutching black hand lifting itself above the gunwale of the little boat. Surely it was a nightmare! At the same instant a dim but devilish-looking face appeared to rise out of the water, and then came a lurch of the canoe, the quick flash of a knife, and an awful yell from the Wakwafi who was sleeping by my side (the same poor fellow whose odour had been annoying me), and something warm spurted into my face. In an instant the spell was broken; I

[1] No doubt this owl was a wingless bird. I afterwards learnt that the hooting of an owl is a favourite signal among the Masai tribes.

knew that it was no nightmare, but that we were attacked by swimming Masai. Snatching at the first weapon that came to hand, which happened to be Umslopogaas' battle-axe, I struck with all my force in the direction in which I had seen the flash of the knife. The blow fell upon a man's arm, and, catching it against the thick wooden gunwale of the canoe, completely severed it from the body just above the wrist. As for its owner, he uttered no sound or cry. Like a ghost he came, and like a ghost he went, leaving behind him a bloody hand still gripping a great knife, or rather a short sword, that was buried in the heart of our poor servant.

Instantly there arose a hubbub and confusion, and I fancied, rightly or wrongly, that I made out several dark heads gliding away towards the right-hand bank, whither we were rapidly drifting, for the rope by which we were moored had been severed with a knife. As soon as I had realised this fact, I also realised that the scheme had been to cut the boat loose so that it should drift on to the right bank (as it would have done with the natural swing of the current), where no doubt a party of Masai were waiting to dig their shovel-headed spears into us. Seizing one paddle myself, I told Umslopogaas to take another (for the remaining Askari was too frightened and bewildered to be of any use), and together we rowed vigorously out towards the middle of the stream; and not an instant too soon, for in another minute we should have been aground, and then there would have been an end of us.

As soon as we were well out, we set to work to paddle the canoe up stream again to where the other was moored; and very hard and dangerous work it was in the dark, and with nothing but the notes of Good's stentorian shouts, which he kept firing off at intervals like a fog-horn, to guide us. But at last we fetched up, and were thankful to find that they had not been molested at all. No doubt the owner of the same hand that severed our rope should have severed theirs also, but was led away from his purpose by an irresistible inclination to murder when he got the chance, which, whilst it cost us a man and him his hand, undoubtedly saved all the rest of us from massacre. Had it not been for that ghastly apparition over the side of the boat—an apparition that I shall never forget till my dying hour—the canoe would undoubtedly have drifted ashore before I realised what had happened, and this history would never have been written by me.

CHAPTER III.

THE MISSION STATION.

WE made the remains of our rope fast to the other canoe, and sat waiting for the dawn and congratulating ourselves upon our merciful escape, which really seemed to result more from the special favour of Providence than from our own care or prowess. At last it came, and I have not often been more grateful to see the light, though so far as my canoe was concerned it revealed a ghastly sight. There in the bottom of the little boat lay the unfortunate Askari, the sime, or sword, in his bosom, and the severed hand gripping the handle. I could not bear the sight, so hauling up the stone which had served as an anchor to the other canoe, we made it fast to the murdered man and dropped him overboard, and down he went to the bottom, leaving nothing but a train of bubbles behind him. Alas! when our time comes, most of us like him leave nothing but bubbles behind, to show that we have been, and the bubbles soon burst. The hand of his murderer we threw into the stream, and I saw a young crocodile seize it as it was slowly sinking. The sword, of which the handle was ivory, inlaid with gold (evidently Arab work), I kept and used as a hunting-knife, and very useful it proved.

Then, a man having been transferred to my canoe, we once more started on in very low spirits and not feeling at all comfortable as to the future, but fondly hoping to fetch up at the 'Highlands' station by night. To make matters worse, within an hour of sunrise it came on to rain in torrents, wetting us to the skin, and even necessitating the occasional baling of the canoes, and as the rain beat down the wind we could not use our sails, and had to get along as best we could with our paddles.

At eleven o'clock we halted on an open piece of ground on the left bank of the river, and, the rain abating a little, managed to make a fire and catch and boil some fish. We did not dare to wander about to search for game. At two o'clock we got off again, taking a supply of boiled fish with us, and shortly afterwards the rain came on harder than ever. Also the river began to get exceedingly difficult to navigate on account of the numerous rocks, reaches of shallow water, and the increased force of the current; so that it soon became clear to us that we should not reach the Rev. Mackenzie's hospitable roof that night—a prospect

that did not tend to enliven us. Toil as we would, we could not make more than an average of a mile an hour, and at five o'clock in the afternoon (by which time we were all utterly worn out) we reckoned that we were still quite ten miles below the station. This being so, we set to work to make the best arrangements we could for the night. After our recent experience, we simply did not dare to land, more especially as the banks of the Tana were here clothed with dense bush that would have given cover to five thousand Masai, and at first I thought that we were going to have another night of it in the canoes. Fortunately, however, we espied a little rocky islet, not more than fifteen yards or so square, situated nearly in the middle of the river. For this we paddled, and, making fast the canoes, landed and made ourselves as comfortable as circumstances would permit, which was very uncomfortable indeed. As for the weather, it continued to be simply vile, the rain coming down in sheets till we were chilled to the marrow, and utterly preventing us from lighting a fire. There was, however, one consoling circumstance about this rain; our Askari declared that nothing would induce the Masai to make an attack in it, as they intensely disliked moving about in the wet, perhaps, as Good suggested, because they hate the idea of washing. We ate some insipid and sodden cold fish—that is, with the exception of Umslopogaas, who, like most Zulus, cannot bear fish—and took a pull of brandy, of which we fortunately had a few bottles left, and then commenced what, with one exception—when we same three white men nearly perished of cold on the snow of Sheba's Breast in the course of our journey to Kukuanaland—was, I think, the most trying night I ever experienced. It seemed absolutely endless, and once or twice I feared that two of the Askari would have died of the wet, cold, and exposure. Indeed, had it not been for timely doses of brandy I am sure that they would have died, for no African people can stand much exposure, which first paralyses and then kills them. I could see that even that iron old warrior Umslopogaas felt it keenly; though, in strange contrast to the Wakwafis, who groaned and bemoaned their fate unceasingly, he never uttered a single complaint. To make matters worse, about one in the morning we again heard the owl's ominous hooting, and had at once to prepare ourselves for another attack; though, if it had been attempted, I do not think that we could have offered a very effective resistance. But either the owl was a real one this time, or else the Masai were themselves too miserable to think of offensive operations, which, indeed,

they rarely, if ever, undertake in bush veldt. At any rate, we saw nothing of them.

At last the dawn came gliding across the water, wrapped in wreaths of ghostly mist, and, with the daylight, the rain ceased; and then, oh joy! out came the glorious sun, sucking up the mists and warming the chill air. Benumbed, and utterly exhausted, we dragged ourselves to our feet, and went and stood in the bright rays, and were thankful for them. I can quite understand how it is that primitive people become sun worshippers, especially if their conditions of life render them liable to exposure.

In half an hour more we were once again making fair progress with the help of a good wind. Our spirits had returned with the sunshine, and we were ready to laugh at difficulties and dangers that had been almost crushing on the previous day.

And so we went on cheerily till about eleven o'clock. Just as we were thinking of halting as usual, to rest and try to shoot something to eat, a sudden bend in the river brought us in sight of a substantial-looking European house with a verandah round it, splendidly situated upon a hill, and surrounded by a high stone wall with a ditch on the outer side. Right against and overshadowing the house was an enormous pine, the top of which we had seen through a glass for the last two days, but of course without knowing that it marked the site of the mission station. I was the first to see the house, and could not restrain myself from giving a hearty cheer, in which the others, including the natives, joined lustily. There was no thought of halting now. On we laboured, for, unfortunately, though the house seemed quite near, it was still a long way off by river, until at last, by one o'clock, we found ourselves at the bottom of the slope on which the building stood. Running the canoes to the bank, we disembarked, and were just hauling them up on to the shore, when we perceived three figures, dressed in ordinary English-looking clothes, hurrying down through a grove of trees to meet us.

'A gentleman, a lady, and a little girl,' ejaculated Good, after surveying the trio through his eyeglass, 'walking in a civilised fashion, through a civilised garden, to meet us in this place. Hang me, if this isn't the most curious thing we have seen yet.'

Good was right: it certainly did seem odd and out of place—more like a scene out of a dream or an Italian opera than a real tangible fact; and the sense of unreality was not lessened when we heard ourselves addressed in good broad Scotch, which, however, I cannot reproduce.

'How do you do, sirs,' said Mr. Mackenzie, a grey-haired, angular man, with a kindly face and red cheeks; 'I hope I see you very well. My natives told me an hour ago they spied two canoes with white men in them coming up the river; so we have just come down to meet you.'

'And it is very glad that we are to see a white face again, let me tell you,' put in the lady—a charming and refined-looking person.

We took off our hats in acknowledgment, and proceeded to introduce ourselves.

'And now,' said Mr. Mackenzie, 'you must all be hungry and weary; so come on, gentlemen, come on, and right glad we are to see you. The last white who visited us was Alphonse—you will see Alphonse presently—and that was a year ago.'

Meanwhile we had been walking up the slope of the hill, the lower portion of which was fenced off, sometimes with quince fences and sometimes with rough stone walls, into Kaffir gardens, just now full of crops of mealies, pumpkins, potatoes, &c. In the corners of these gardens were groups of neat mushroom-shaped huts, occupied by Mr. Mackenzie's mission natives, whose women and children came pouring out to meet us as we walked. Through the centre of the gardens ran the roadway up which we were walking. It was bordered on each side by a line of orange-trees, which, although they had only been planted ten years, had in the lovely climate of the uplands below Mt. Kenia, the base of which is about 5,000 feet above the coast line level, already grown to imposing proportions, and were positively laden with golden fruit. After a stiffish climb of a quarter of a mile or so—for the hill-side was steep—we came to a splendid quince fence, also covered with fruit, which enclosed, Mr. Mackenzie told us, a space of about four acres of ground that comprised his private garden, house, church, and outbuildings, and, indeed, the whole hill-top. And what a garden it was! I have always loved a good garden, and I could have thrown up my hands for joy when I saw Mr. Mackenzie's. First there were rows upon rows of standard European fruit-trees, all grafted; for on the top of this hill the climate was so temperate that very nearly all the English vegetables, trees, and flowers flourished luxuriantly, even including several varieties of the apple, which, generally speaking, runs to wood in a warm climate and obstinately declines to fruit. Then there were strawberries and tomatoes (such tomatoes!), and melons and cucumbers, and, indeed, every sort of vegetable and fruit.

'Well, you have something like a garden!' I said, overpowered with admiration not untouched by envy.

'Yes,' answered the missionary, 'it is a very good garden, and has well repaid my labour; but it is the climate that I have to thank. If you stick a peach-stone into the ground it will bear fruit the fourth year, and a rose-cutting will bloom in a year. It is a lovely clime.'

Just then we came to a ditch about ten feet wide, and full of water, on the other side of which was a loop-holed stone wall eight feet high, and with sharp flints plentifully set in mortar on the coping.

'There,' said Mr. Mackenzie, pointing to the ditch and wall, 'this is my *magnum opus*; at least, this and the church, which is the other side of the house. It took me and twenty natives two years to dig the ditch and build the wall, but I never felt safe till it was done; and now I can defy all the savages in Africa, for the spring that fills the ditch is inside the wall, and bubbles out at the top of the hill winter and summer alike, and I always keep a store of four months' provisions in the house.'

Crossing over a plank and through a very narrow opening in the wall, we entered into what Mrs. Mackenzie called *her* domain —namely, the flower garden, the beauty of which it is really beyond my power to describe. I do not think I ever saw such roses, gardenias, or camellias (all reared from seeds or cuttings sent from England); and there was also a patch given up to a collection of bulbous roots mostly collected by Miss Flossie, Mr. Mackenzie's little daughter, from the surrounding country, some of which were surpassingly beautiful. In the middle of this garden, and exactly opposite the verandah, a beautiful fountain of clear water bubbled up from the ground, and fell into a stone-work basin which had been carefully built to receive it, whence the overflow found its way by means of a drain to the moat round the outer wall, this moat in its turn serving as a reservoir, whence an unfailing supply of water was available to irrigate all the gardens below. The house itself, a massively built single-storied building, was roofed with slabs of stone, and had a handsome verandah in front. It was built on three sides of a square, the fourth side being taken up by the kitchens, which stood separate from the house—a very good plan in a hot country. In the centre of this square thus formed was, perhaps, the most remarkable object that we had yet seen in this charming place, and that was a single tree of the conifer tribe, varieties of which

grow freely on the highlands of this part of Africa. This splendid tree, which Mr. Mackenzie informed us was a landmark for fifty miles round, and which we had ourselves seen for the last forty miles of our journey, must have been nearly three hundred feet in height, the trunk measuring about sixteen feet in diameter at a yard from the ground. For some seventy feet it rose a beautiful tapering brown pillar without a single branch, but at that height splendid dark green boughs, which, looked at from below, had the appearance of gigantic fern-leaves, sprang out horizontally from the trunk, projecting right over the house and flower-garden, to both of which they furnished a grateful proportion of shade, without—being so high up—offering any impediment to the passage of light and air.

'What a beautiful tree!' exclaimed Sir Henry.

'Yes, you are right; it is a beautiful tree. There is not another like it in all the country round, that I know of,' answered Mr. Mackenzie. 'I call it my watch tower. As you see, I have a rope ladder fixed to the lowest bough; and if I want to see anything that is going on within fifteen miles or so, all I have to do is to run up it with a spyglass. But you must be hungry, and I am sure the dinner is cooked. Come in, my friends; it is but a rough place, but well enough for these savage parts; and I can tell you what we have got—a French cook.' And he led the way on to the verandah.

As I was following him, and wondering what on earth he could mean by this, there suddenly appeared, through the door that opened on to the verandah from the house, a dapper little man, dressed in a neat blue cotton suit, and shoes made of tanned hide, and remarkable for a bustling air and most enormous black moustachios, shaped into an upward curve, and coming to a point for all the world like a pair of buffalo-horns.

'Madame bids me for to say that dinnar is sarved. Messieurs, my compliments;' then suddenly perceiving Umslopogaas, who was loitering along after us and playing with his battle-axe, he threw up his hands in astonishment. '*Ah, mais quel homme!*' he ejaculated in French, '*quel sauvage affreux!* Take but note of his huge choppare and the great pit in his head.'

'Ay,' said Mr. Mackenzie; 'what are you talking about, Alphonse?'

'Talking about!' replied the little Frenchman, his eyes still fixed upon Umslopogaas, whose general appearance seemed to

fascinate him; 'why I talk of him'—and he rudely pointed—'of *ce monsieur noir.*'

At this everybody began to laugh, and Umslopogaas, perceiving that he was the object of remark, frowned ferociously, for he had a most lordly dislike of anything like a personal liberty.

'*Parbleu!*' said Alphonse, 'he is angered—he makes the grimaces. I like not his air. I vanish.' And he did with considerable rapidity.

Mr. Mackenzie joined heartily in the shout of laughter which we indulged in. 'He is a queer character—Alphonse,' he said. 'By-and-by I will tell you his history; in the meanwhile let us try his cooking.'

'Might I ask,' said Sir Henry, after we had eaten a most excellent dinner, 'how you came to have a French cook in these wilds?'

'Oh,' answered Mrs. Mackenzie, 'he arrived here of his own accord about a year ago, and asked to be taken into our service. He had got into some trouble in France, and fled to Zanzibar, where he found an application had been made by the French Government for his extradition. Whereupon he rushed off up-country, and fell in, when nearly starved, with our caravan of men, who were bringing us our annual supply of goods, and was brought on here. You should get him to tell you the story.'

When dinner was over we lit our pipes, and Sir Henry proceeded to give our host a description of our journey up here, over which he looked very grave.

'It is evident to me,' he said, 'that those rascally Masai are following you, and I am very thankful that you have reached this house in safety. I do not think that they will dare to attack you here. It is unfortunate, though, that nearly all my men have gone down to the coast with ivory and goods. There are two hundred of them in the caravan, and the consequence is that I have not more than twenty men available for defensive purposes in case they should attack us. But, still, I will just give a few orders;' and, calling a black man who was loitering about outside in the garden, he went to the window, and addressed him in a Swahili dialect. The man listened, and then saluted and departed.

'I am sure I devoutly hope that we shall bring no such calamity upon you,' said I, anxiously, when he had taken his seat again. 'Rather than bring those bloodthirsty villains about your ears, we will move on and take our chance.'

'You will do nothing of the sort. If the Masai come they come, and there is an end on it; and I think we can give them a pretty warm greeting. I would not show any man the door for all the Masai in the world.'

'That reminds me,' I said, 'the Consul at Lamu told me that he had had a letter from you, in which you said that a man had arrived here who reported that he had come across a white people in the interior. Do you think that there was any truth in his story? I ask, because I have once or twice in my life heard rumours from natives who have come down from the far north of the existence of such a race.'

Mr. Mackenzie, by way of answer, went out of the room and returned, bringing with him a most curious sword. It was long, and all the blade, which was very thick and heavy, was to within a quarter of an inch of the cutting edge worked into an ornamental pattern exactly as we work soft wood with a fretsaw, the steel, however, being invariably pierced in such a way as not to interfere with the strength of the sword. This in itself was sufficiently curious, but what was still more so was that all the edges of the hollow spaces cut through the substance of the blade were most beautifully inlaid with gold, which was in some way that I cannot understand welded on to the steel.[1]

'There,' said Mr. Mackenzie, 'did you ever see a sword like that?'

We all examined it and shook our heads.

'Well, I have got it to show you, because this is what the man who said he had seen the white people brought with him, and because it does more or less give an air of truth to what I should otherwise have set down as a lie. Look here; I will tell you all that I know about the matter, which is not much. One afternoon, just before sundown, I was sitting on the verandah, when a poor, miserable, starved-looking man came limping up and squatted down before me. I asked him where he came from and what he wanted, and thereon he plunged into a long rambling narrative about how he belonged to a tribe far in the north, and how his tribe was destroyed by another tribe, and he with a few other survivors driven still further north past a lake named Laga. Thence, it appears, he made his way to another lake that lay up in the mountains, "a lake without a bottom" he called it, and here

[1] Since I saw the above I have examined hundreds of these swords, but have never been able to discover how the gold plates were inlaid in the fretwork. The armourers who make them in Zu-vendis bind themselves by oath not to reveal the secret.- A. Q.

his wife and brother died of an infectious sickness—probably smallpox—whereon the people drove him out of their villages into the wilderness, where he wandered miserably over mountains for ten days, after which he got into dense thorn forest, and was one day found there by some *white men* who were hunting, and who took him to a place where all the people were white and lived in stone houses. Here he remained a week shut up in a house, till one night a man with a white beard, whom he understood to be a "medicine-man," came and inspected him, after which he was led off and taken through the thorn forest to the confines of the wilderness, and given food and this sword (at least so he said), and turned loose.'

'Well,' said Sir Henry, who had been listening with breathless interest, 'and what did he do then?'

'Oh! he seems, according to his account, to have gone through sufferings and hardships innumerable, and to have lived for weeks on roots and berries, and such things as he could catch and kill. But somehow he did live, and at last by slow degrees made his way south and reached this place. What the details of his journey were I never learnt, for I told him to return on the morrow, bidding one of my headmen look after him for the night. The headman took him away, but the poor man had the itch so badly that the headman's wife would not have him in the hut for fear of catching it, so he was given a blanket and told to sleep outside. As it happened, we had a lion hanging about here just then, and most unhappily he winded this unfortunate wanderer, and, springing on him, bit his head right off without the people in the hut knowing anything about it, and there was an end of him and his story about the white people; and whether or no there is any truth in it is more than I can tell you. What do you think, Mr. Quatermain?'

I shook my head, and answered, 'I don't know. There are so many queer things hidden away in the heart of this great continent that I should be sorry to assert that there was no truth in it. Anyhow, we mean to try and find out. We intend to journey to Lekakisera, and thence, if we live to get so far, to this Lake Laga; and, if there are any white people beyond, we will do our best to find them.'

'You are very venturesome people,' said Mr. Mackenzie, with a smile, and the subject dropped.

(*To be continued.*)

Lincoln College, Oxford, Thirty Years Ago.

AT the Lincoln College dinner, held in St. James's Hall in 1882, which assumed very much the character of a farewell dinner to the sub-rector on his election to the presidentship of C.C.C., the guest of the evening alluded to his first connection with Lincoln in some such terms as these: 'Nearly thirty years ago, when I first came to Lincoln, there were not more than thirty men in college; but it would have been difficult to find any body of thirty young men, of whom so many afterwards became distinguished.' He then specified Mr. John Morley, of political, and still more, of literary renown; Mr. J. Cotter Morison, the brilliant writer of the Life of S. Bernard, and of those two gems, 'Gibbon,' and 'Macaulay,' in the 'English Men of Letters' series; Sir Lewis Cave, the eminent judge; Dr. Stokoe, preacher at Gray's Inn, and head master of King's College School; Mr. F. E. Thompson, the very popular and successful master at Marlborough College, and writer of an excellent Greek syntax; Mr. C. J. Abbey, joint author of 'The English Church in the Eighteenth Century,' and another. The list might have been still further extended if the professor had included, not only those who had actually become distinguished, but also those who, by their university achievements, or by their after-career, certainly proved themselves worthy of distinction. Seven men, however, out of thirty, who have made for themselves a name in the intellectual world, is surely an extraordinarily large proportion; and it would be too presumptuous and invidious a task to attempt to select others out of the number.

Since the professor spoke, the Lincoln College of thirty years ago has come prominently before the public in connection with the memoirs of its late distinguished rector, Mark Pattison. The reminiscences, therefore, of one who was a resident undergraduate at the time, and knew intimately all the men mentioned above, may not be unacceptable to the reader.

My first impressions, when I came into residence at Lincoln

College in the spring of 1854, were certainly that I had come among a set of men of great intellectual activity. I had come (though not immediately) from a very distinguished school, then almost at the height of its distinction. But I felt that I had passed from contact with the boyish to contact with the manly mind. The topics of conversation, instead of being, 'Who was going to win this cricket match?' 'Who was going to carry off that prize?' were questions of wide general interest, which were discussed with more than the confidence of experienced men of the world. The jokes were not of the staple schoolboy type, but, as I thought them then, brilliant witticisms. In point of mere scholarship, the boys I had left were superior to the 'men' I had come among; but, in other respects, it was a change from rawness to maturity, not to say precocity, which filled my youthful mind with awe. The success of Lincoln in the University examinations was not a fair criterion of the intellect of the college. Of the men whom Professor Fowler mentioned, only one took a First in the Final Schools; but it is no derogation to the value of a first class to say that seven first-class men taken at haphazard would hardly show such a measure of intellectual success as these men subsequently attained. Lincoln did fairly well, but only fairly well, in the Honour Schools. It seldom carried off—few of its members ever attempted to carry off—any of the great University prizes. We had not many men from the great public schools; and from a purely intellectual point of view, this was, perhaps, not altogether a misfortune. Socially it would doubtless have been an advantage if we had had a larger sprinkling of the public school element. But the public schools live very much in a world of their own, and carry it with them wherever they go. We, at Lincoln, prided ourselves upon being cosmopolitan. Perhaps some of us, absurd young donkeys that we were, thought that we had a soul above prizes and honours. At any rate, we were by no means disposed to limit our reading, our interest, and our conversation, to the subjects marked out for us in the University curriculum. There is a tradition—I will not vouch for the truth of it—that one of the most brilliant of our number, having failed, in his examination for his degree, to answer question after question in Greek and Roman history, said to the examiner, 'Sir, I have studied the philosophy of history; but I really could not burden my mind with the trivial and mendacious details of Herodotus and Livy.' It is needless to say what the fate of that gentleman was. German philosophy, gathered probably from the

pages of Carlyle, Imperial and University politics, English poetry and the fine arts, theology to a small extent—but only, I think, to a small extent—were the subjects of discussion. Mr. Ruskin was, even thirty years ago, our guide in art; the 'Stones of Venice' and 'Modern Painters' were constantly quoted; we were staunch Pre-Raphaelites. In poetry we were enthusiastic admirers of Tennyson, and would walk up and down 'The Grove' spouting his verses for hours together. Our matter-of-fact friends did not always appreciate the performance. I was once interrupted in the midst of declaiming:

'O! my cousin, shallow-hearted! O, my Amy, mine no more!'

and so forth, by the exclamation of a friend who knew my belongings, 'Why, I thought you had only one cousin, and they call her Mary, not Amy; and she's only a bairn;' he thought in his innocence I was laying claim to a distinction (for it is always a distinction to a young man to have an affair of the heart) to which I had no right. On another occasion I was trying to impress upon a prosaic friend the dreamy beauty of 'The Two Voices,' and was reading it in the most solemn and sonorous tone; when, after much yawning and fidgeting, he exclaimed, 'Why, it's just like a sermon!' It might have been, but it was not, the same man who once, when we were discussing, on high transcendental grounds, whether the celibate or the married life was the higher state for a clergyman, brought us down from the clouds by remarking, 'Well, I don't know about all that; but I think poor curates ought not to marry, when they can't afford to keep a wife!'

There was, of course, a muscular set and an intellectual set at Lincoln, but their limits were not very markedly defined. The exclusively muscular set did not trouble themselves about poetry, philosophy, and art; but some of the intellectual set, on principle, affected athletics. As philosophers, we agreed with Plato, that 'gymnastic,' no less than 'music' (in the Greek sense of the term), formed part of the education of the perfect man. And so, with some, 'Maclaren's,' then in its infancy, was a favourite resort. Stokoe was captain of the college boat; F. E. Thompson and myself were devoted to all sorts of athletic amusements—as philosophers. We thought that boxing was a capital thing to clear the head; so we procured boxing gloves and pounded away at one another between lectures, greatly to the edification, no doubt, of

the gentleman who had rooms below us. Often, of a summer morning, have we plunged together for a swim in the Isis at 'Parson's Pleasure'; often have we shot the rapids in a light skiff on the Cherwell; almost every creek about Oxford has been explored by us in our 'dingys'; and once, having made a rash resolution to circumnavigate Binsey, we stuck ignominiously, boats and all, in a hedge. It was all done in the spirit of the philosopher; but the philosopher is but a man in armour after all; and it must be owned that we were not philosophically indifferent to the winning of prizes. Thompson was an uncommonly useful man in a boat at any time, but he was more useful when he was pulling for a pewter than when he was only pulling for glory; and I remember being most unphilosophically exultant when I carried off in one day no less than five pewters.

The most characteristic institution of the intellectual set at Lincoln was the Debating Society, which was founded in my time. John Morley was one of our most brilliant, effective, and constant speakers. The Lincoln Debating Society may, I think, claim the merit of developing the speaking powers of the present Justice Cave. At any rate, I, and I think I may add the rest of his fellow collegians, had no idea that he had these gifts to so remarkable an extent until the Society brought them before our notice. I remember one speech of his in particular; some unlucky out-college man (we admitted outsiders) ventured to depreciate Tennyson's poetry, and was answered by Cave in a completely annihilating speech. The only collision I remember between the muscular and the intellectual sets was in connection with this Debating Society. Thompson was elected president, and myself vice-president; but the election did not pass without opposition. One of the purely intellectual set remarked after it was over, 'It was the *ναυτικὸς ὄχλος* which carried you.' There was certainly some reason in the opposition; for there were several far more efficient debaters than we were; but, having been elected, we felt bound to make up for our deficiencies, by being scrupulously regular in our attendance. One evening there happened to be special meetings both of the Debating Society and the Boat Club, of which I was the captain, and Thompson, I think, the secretary. We were, therefore, due in both places; but not being endowed with the qualities of Sir Boyle Roche's bird, we could not manage this; and so selected the Debating meeting. When we were in the midst of the debate, a party of stalwart young athletes made a rush at the

room to carry us off by force; how the matter ended I cannot recollect.

Among the pleasant reminiscences of my undergraduate days must certainly be placed my connection with the college tutors. The earlier part was the time which Mark Pattison has so feelingly described in his memoirs, the time when he had just been disappointed of the rectorship and was dragging on a weary existence as a sort of tutor, without any heart in his work. At least, so he tells us in effect in his memoirs; but I cannot say that I discovered it. I have a vivid recollection of the pains he took with the little work I did for him; he inspired me with a feeling of awe which I never lost up to the time of his death, but I certainly cannot complain of any want of interest on his part. His great excellence as a tutor appeared to me to be the effectual way in which he made a pupil realise his own ignorance and the vast field of knowledge which lay before him. He could do this without using many words. For instance, I had once to write an essay for Pattison, and, as this was an unusual thing, I determined to turn out an extra-superfine production; so I used all the longest words I could think of, aired the most profound sentiments, and produced, I have no doubt, a farrago of vapid and pretentious twaddle, though at that time I was not a little proud of my performance. Pattison read it carefully through, turning over page after page without uttering a single word. When he had quite finished it, he stared at me with that stony glare through his spectacles which all his pupils will well remember, but still uttered not a word. Had my stupendous performance taken away his breath? Was he lost in admiration of its merits? Was it so faultless that it was impossible for even so keen a critic to pick a hole in it? At last the pause became so embarrassing that I felt I must break it at all hazards. 'I am afraid, sir,' I said (though I did not think), 'that it is very bad.' He simply replied, 'Very,' and handed the now hateful document back to me. I left the room a sadder and, I trust, a wiser man, consigned my lucubrations to the flames, and have never since attempted to write in the high-falutin' style.

One term Thompson and I had only one lecture with Pattison, and that at an unusual hour for lectures. The consequence was that we twice forgot to attend. Whereupon he sent for us and gave us such a 'lecture,' in a slightly different sense of the term, as made us feel utterly contemptible in our own eyes. He did not take the line of rebuking us for our carelessness, but dwelt rather

upon the intellectual feebleness which such carelessness implied. 'He could scarcely conceive it possible for a human intellect to be in so disordered a state as to forget such a duty.' In fact he so worked upon our intellectual *amour propre* that, to prevent a recurrence of such a catastrophe, which would have made us appear both to him and ourselves in the light of absolute idiots, we immediately set up a placard with the magic word PAT in huge capital letters, to act as a sort of flapper to our treacherous memories.

It is a great mistake to suppose that Pattison was a mere bookworm. Slightingly as he speaks of athletics (what delightfully incisive expressions those are of his, 'I cannot take an interest in their kicking-matches;' 'they are mere barbarians of the arena') he was something of an athlete himself. In my time he enjoyed a game at racquets, was a keen fisherman, a persevering skater, and took a true Yorkshireman's interest in a horse. I once received a well-deserved snub from him for assuming that he was thinking only of reading. 'Where are you going to this Easter Vacation?' he said to me at one of his rather formidable tea-parties. 'I was thinking of going to Pangbourne; it is a good place for reading, sir, is it not?' 'Oh! I didn't mean that,' he said testily, and at once turned on his heel. He knew as well as I did, young hypocrite as I was, that I had no intention of reading wherever I went.

But it was the generation immediately before mine (all of whom, however, I knew intimately) who were Pattison's pupils in his palmy days; from them we used to hear enthusiastic accounts of 'Old Pat's' powers. In that contest for the rectorship which forms so painful an episode in his memoirs, the sympathy of the undergraduates was strongly with Pattison. A song used to be sung on this subject in my time. It was a sort of parody on 'Lord Lovel,' and commenced

Mark Pattison stood at the chapel gate.

The writer, I fancy, was Branson, pleasantest and wittiest of men, now, alas! passed away. He was an admirable song writer. One of his compositions, in particular, I remember. It was the time when there was a panic in the outer world (and therefore also in the little world of Lincoln, for we entered with a keen zest into all matters of public interest), caused by the claim of the Pope to confer episcopal titles derived from English cities and towns upon his own ecclesiastics, and especially by the appointment of

Cardinal Wiseman as Archbishop of Westminster.[1] Branson turned the matter into a song which he used to sing with great *éclat* at our 'wines' and suppers. It began:

> Pope Pius the Ninth with his triple crown,
> That impudent old Pretender;

and the chorus, which every one sang to the tune he knew best, ran:

> So here we go, High Church and Low,
> The Romish Church must rise, man;
> And the man to manage the business best
> Is Nicholas, Cardinal Wiseman.

Our 'Mods' tutor was Octavius Ogle, whose keen appreciation of the beauties of the great classical writers, especially of the poets, has of late been vividly brought before me by some admirable paraphrases of passages in Homer which have appeared in the *Spectator*, with his signature. But *the* tutor to whom the men of my generation owe the greatest debt of gratitude was unquestionably the present President of C.C.C. No words of mine can adequately express the immense pains, the deep interest, the unfailing patience, the hearty geniality he showed in his dealings with us. He was one of the first to break through the barriers which used to stand between the undergraduate and the don. He treated us as friends and equals rather than as pupils and inferiors, and yet he never lost his dignity or power of command. We were familiar with him, yet never took a liberty with him. 'Please drop the Mr. and call me Fowler, except in lecture,' he once said to me; and he thoroughly knew how to keep up the distinction here implied. Many a delightful expedition with him, both in the neighbourhood of Oxford and further afield, is vividly present in my mind; and, as he was an experienced, intelligent, and observant traveller, I learnt as much from him in our excursions as I did at his lectures, which is saying much. When the time of our relationship as tutor and pupil was ending he gave me a souvenir, which I cherish among my most valued treasures, with the following inscription, which I venture, without, I trust, offence to him, here to transcribe:—'John Henry Overton, in memory of many very happy hours. From one who, in esteeming him as a pupil, has learned to love him as a friend, and who hopes that though the one

[1] This took place some years earlier, but the excitement which it caused had not died away thirty years ago.

relation has now nearly closed, the other may last and grow through life. Last day of Lectures, Easter Term, 1857.' Nearly thirty years have elapsed since these words were written, but I am thankful to say that the hope expressed in them has been literally fulfilled; he is as dear a friend to the grey-headed man as he was to the fresh youth; and it was with strangely mingled sensations of intense satisfaction and gentle melancholy, as thoughts of the distant past came crowding upon me, that I received the information that, by his express wish, I was to be the proposer of his health at the farewell dinner to which I referred at the commencement of this paper.

As I have determined, by a severe exercise of self-denial, only to touch upon those Lincoln luminaries whom Professor Fowler specified, I trust those distinguished gentlemen will not be offended if I venture to recall a few more of my recollections of them. Morison was then, as now, an admirable conversationalist, and always took a leading part in our semi-philosophical, semi-bacchanalian gatherings. He had lived much in France, and had acquired something of the brilliant tone of the French *salons*. He had seen more of the world than most of us, and had learned to turn what he had seen to good account. A really good talker is much more rare than a good speaker or a good writer, and, in these days of hurry, is rarer than ever. I have only met one or two in the course of my life; but Morison was assuredly one of the few. John Morley was then an ardent disciple of Carlyle, and a singularly bright and genial fellow. The first time that I was impressed with the great versatility of his intellectual powers was on the occasion of a college party, at which two genuine specimens of the British farmer were present. Who they were, and how they got there, I have not the least idea; but the incongruity of their presence invested them with the sort of interest which Sydney Smith's fly in amber possessed, and I could not help gazing at them with a kind of fascination. Morley was sitting between the two, and the contrast between their stolid, bucolic faces and the markedly intellectual expression of his, was most striking. He kept up an animated conversation with them all the evening, but I was not near enough to hear what it was all about.

It is a pity that there are no ingenious persons, to forecast who will be the eminent men of the future, which would enable their contemporaries to treasure up recollections of them in their youth. One feels this when one tries to conjure up

the memories of the past in connexion with a gentleman who has made for himself so distinguished a name both in literature and politics as Mr. John Morley has done. But it is a far cry from 1886 to 1856, and after thirty years one's reminiscences are apt to be rather hazy. On one point, however, I am quite clear; and, as will be seen from what is said below respecting another of my contemporaries at Lincoln, Mr. John Wylie, it is necessary to state it distinctly. Owing to circumstances into which it is not needful to enter, Mr. John Morley did not win the University distinction to which his abilities and attainments unquestionably entitled him. But it must not be for one moment supposed that his University failed to appreciate his talents. Long before he had become the famous man he is now, I have heard his college tutor, Professor Fowler, express the very high opinion he entertained of his talents, and the regret he felt that he had been prevented from doing himself justice in the schools. Mr. Morley's brother-undergraduates undoubtedly took the same view of him; as an illustration of which I may take my own case. About twenty years ago, when I was first fired with the ambition of doing something in literature, the very first thing I did was to consult my old friend, John Morley, on the subject, because I thought him the most competent man I knew to give advice. Of course we differed widely on many all-important subjects; but this difference only accentuates the high opinion I must have had of his literary ability, when I asked, and, what is much rarer, tried to follow his advice. The pains he took, and the kind interest he showed in the matter, I shall ever remember with the greatest gratitude. I sent him two of my lucubrations, one on a social subject, the other on the Greek Tragedians, and asked him to criticise them freely. Public men are, to some extent, public property; he will not therefore, I trust, consider it a breach of confidence if I venture to record, for the benefit of young *littérateurs*, some of the excellent counsel he gave me. 'I have read,' he says, 'your two MSS. with attention. The social essay is on an excellently chosen subject, and the treatment is a marked improvement on the earlier pieces you sent me. [From this it appears that I had consulted him before.] Many things a hundred times less good find their way into print every week. But it is still marked with a certain stiffness of phraseology; with too much straightness of division; above all with too much of the "we" and "this article." In the good essay all should be easy, free, unrestrained, non-didactic. I should say, honestly, that with a very little practice

indeed you would be quite up to the mark of this sort of essay; only write with an unconsciousness that you are before the public. Don't be afraid of being grave, but steer wide of hardness or stiffness. A touch of gravity is necessary to give point to your humour. The essay on Euripides is good, but I think it is a little too much from the modern point of view; and, moreover, you go over too much ground. The right way, I suspect, of handling an old subject of this sort is to make one or at most a couple of reflections suggested by this or that side of the poet, and then to work them out in detail. It will perhaps be a year or two before you attain freedom enough to attain anything like regular facility in literary production. But by no means give up the notion of essay-writing as a thing to be practised ἐκ παρέργου.—Pardon the pedagogue.' On looking over the yellow, time-worn papers, I see how true his comments were; and if I have to any extent overcome the defects he speaks of, I have to thank Mr. John Morley for the victory.

Cave I remember chiefly as an excellent whist-player. Perhaps the same powers of keen observation and adroit resource which are necessary for that noblest of games stood him in stead when the eminent counsel and embryo judge was winning the admiration and envy of less successful members of the bar. Stokoe was the possessor of a rich, deep bass voice, which was frequently called into exercise at our parties. I wonder whether the grave Doctor of Divinity has forgotten

If ever I should marry, it would be with the lass
Whose breath is as sweet as the dew upon the grass,
Teeth as white as ivory, eyes as bright,
Bright as the stars on a fair frosty night.

(Chorus). Oh! could I find such a lassie as this!
Oh! could I find such a lassie as this!
I would boldly step up to her,
I would flatter, I would woo her,
I would take her by the hand and salute her with a kiss.

In connection with Stokoe's singing I may mention a point which is, no doubt, not peculiar to Lincoln College. In this selfish world one rarely finds such a generous rivalry as one does in the competition of fresh young minds for university honours, such hearty rejoicing at other men's success, such genuine sympathy with other men's failure. I shall never forget the thrill of horror, the grave faces, the bated breath, with which the news was passed

down the College Hall at dinner-time that one of our number, from whom we had expected great things, was plucked! And, on the other hand, I never heard a more genuine cheer than that which burst spontaneously from an assembled supper-party when Stokoe, who had just taken his First, was singing his famous song, 'The Thorough-bred Oxford Man,' and came to the words

> And the honours of a double
> Have crowned all the toil and trouble
> Of the thorough-bred Oxford man!

Thompson was our great authority on Shakespeare, and a man generally respected, not only for his athletic prowess, but also for his singularly blameless character. Abbey was Pattison's favourite pupil, and fully justified the high opinion which that keen and correct judge of intellectual power entertained of him by carrying off no less than three great university prizes, any one of which is, as every Oxford man knows, no inconsiderable feather in any man's cap.

Though I restrict myself to Professor Fowler's list in regard to the living, this restriction need not apply to the dead; and alas! many of my contemporaries passed away before they had time to win for themselves a name in the world. Foremost among these I place John Wylie. At the time when Professor Fowler came among us, Wylie had just been allured from Lincoln to the more refined circle of Trinity; but we always counted him as one of us, and he was frequently within the walls of Lincoln. He came to us from Cheltenham, which was at that time sending up to the University a large number of exceptionally able men;—the present rector of Lincoln, then a scholar of Balliol, was one. Wylie was one of the earliest of the 'competition Wallahs,' and proved himself one of the most brilliant and successful of the many brilliant men whom the Indian Civil Service attracted when it was first thrown open to competition. He was in every way cut out for such a career; for he was not only a man of scholarly instincts and tastes, but he had also abundance of '*savoir faire*,' a pleasing appearance, and agreeable manners. He was, I believe, the originator of those two pithy phrases, 'Masterly Inactivity' and 'Mischievous Activity,' which were the titles of two very able and striking articles on Indian subjects which he wrote for the *Fortnightly Review*, then edited by his friend and fellow collegian, John Morley. He made for himself a great reputation in India, and would, no doubt, have risen to the highest honours there

had he not been prematurely cut off. After his death, a leading article appeared in one of the London journals on his extraordinary promise, in which it was rather unfairly stated that his great powers had not been appreciated at Oxford. The fact is, he left Oxford for India before he had finished his university course; but during the two years he was with us he won two open scholarships and a First Class in Classical Moderations. It is difficult to see what more Oxford could have done to show its appreciation of him; and so far as his undergraduate contemporaries were concerned, I can vouch for it that no man was more highly thought of. Never did I hear Demosthenes construed as Wylie could construe it; in fact, we all considered him, while he was with us, our best man. Among other clever Lincoln men who ought to have made a name for themselves, if they had been spared, was Wormald—Robert Bownas Wormald according to his sponsors—'Tommy' Wormald according to his Lincoln contemporaries, Tommy being the diminutive of 'Uncle Tom,' a name which was given him from his supposed resemblance to the hero of the most popular novel of the day. Poor 'Tommy' was the wildest and wittiest of men, always supposed to be in trouble with his creditors, though I think there was never anything very formidable in his debts, but that the subject was only one of good-natured chaff. I mention it because it reminds me of one of his witty letters. One term he was staying down to read, and he wrote to a friend, 'If any of my suffering creditors inquire after me, tell them that I have been appointed billiard-marker to the king of Timbuctoo; that I am on my way to Africa, and that I am ready to forget and forgive everything.' Among his other accomplishments, Wormald was the best chess-player in the university. Two of the most ready and fluent speakers at our Debating Society have also passed away: J. H. McCheane, afterwards a respected clergyman at Leeds, and W. Baird, the champion of the Church party at Lincoln, who loved to wage a rather unequal combat in debate with John Morley upon the subject.

One of the most pleasing features of my connection with the Lincoln of thirty years ago is, that I have never lost touch with my old friends there. With Fowler I have already said that my intimacy is as close and affectionate as ever. With Pattison I used to communicate until his last illness. One of the first reviews on 'The English Church in the Eighteenth Century' came to me addressed in his well-known hand-writing. I do not think he wrote the review; but none but an author can appreciate the

thoughtful kindness of a brother-author in sending it, for such an one alone knows with what trembling anxiety a young writer looks for the first expression of public opinion upon his performance; in time one gets rather hardened to criticism. One of the kindest letters I received on my appointment to Epworth was again in the well-known hand-writing, but it was so shaky that I feared it augured the end. The contents, however, were as characteristic of the writer as ever. He expressed two wishes; one, that I should find at the rectory a room large enough to contain my books, which he knew to be numerous and valuable; the other that I should not find the parish so large that I should be prevented from working. He meant not parish work, but literary work; and it was eminently characteristic of Pattison to regard 'work' and 'literary work' as synonymous. With Morison and Thompson I am still on terms both of visiting and correspondence. From John Morley I have received several valuable literary hints; and from Cave and Stokoe more than one kind message. With Abbey my connection has, of course, been the closest of all, owing to our literary partnership, in which there has never been a single hitch. That partnership, by the way, was suggested by Fowler, and thus is, in more ways than one, connected with Lincoln College.

Some say that a man's school-days are the happiest days of his life; but in my experience, school life compared with undergraduate life 'is as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine.' My happiest associations are connected with Lincoln College, Oxford. Of course there is a mixture of melancholy in the retrospect as one looks back through the long vista of thirty years, and there is an inclination to sigh—

> Eheu! fugaces, Postume, Postume,
> Oh! for the years that are lost to me, lost to me!

But it is better, if one only can, to adopt the sentiment of the sweet old song, which I quote from memory, and therefore perhaps inaccurately—

> Do ye think of the days that are gone, Robin,
> As ye sit by your fire at night?
> Did ye gather them up as they faded fast,
> Like leaves with an early blight?
>
> I think of the days that are gone, Jeannie;
> They are dear to my heart as then;
> But the brightest that ever arose on me,
> I have never wished back again!

J. H. OVERTON.

The Ship of Dreams.

WHEN silent lies the sleeping town
  In its profoundest rest,
There is a ship comes sailing down
  Upon the River's breast.

Wide-winged as that enchanted swan,
  She saileth through the night,
And purple grows the gloom upon
  The magic of her flight.

The barque she bears no mortal name,
  No crew of mortal mould,
Ulysses' ship of song and flame,
  Of cedar wood and gold!

She is the ship that Turner knew
  On the enchanted seas,
She floats far isles of music through,
  And isles of memories.

And she is mystically fraught
  With dreams remembered long,
That drift on all the tides of thought
  And all the seas of song.

She hath Ulysses by her helm,
  As in the olden time;
This ship of a diviner realm,
  And of a fairer clime.

THE SHIP OF DEATH.

When silent lies the sleeping town
  Unknown to human ken,
Another ship goes sailing down,
  Bearing the souls of Men.

She is the ship of shadowy mist,
  Of mist and mournful grey,
There is no gloom of amethyst
  About her pallid way.

As silent as that dim ship came
  She steals into the dark.
She is no ship of mortal name,
  But an eternal barque!

Her deck is thronged with shadows wan,
  She will not pause or stay,
So speedily she bears them on,
  All on an unknown way.

But sometimes when the dusky tide
  Hath filled the widening stream,
That wan and shadowy ship will glide
  By the ship of song and dream.

Whereon the watchers dimly know
  A terror in the dark,
A pallor; but a fading glow
  Flushes the shadowy barque!

MAY KENDALL.

Tim:

A SKETCH.

I.

RAGGED, starving, his thin face blue and pinched with the cold, he stood, offering his matches to the unheeding, hurrying passers-by. It had been bitterly cold all day, and all day he had trudged the streets, trying in vain to make a copper or two wherewith to buy a meal and pay for a shelter this bitter night. Homeless and friendless he stood there, claiming no home but the workhouse, calling none friend but the terrier trembling at his heels.

An earnest little face he had, stamped with that look of patience which is born only of suffering bravely endured. The clear-cut features were sharpened by cold and hunger, the blue eyes piteous in their glance as he scanned the faces of the moving throng. He shivered every now and then as the keen wind swept round the corner, blowing aside his fluttering rags, and making the gaslight flicker in the lamps; but his voice was cheerful as he bent down to speak to the dog cowering at his feet.

'Cold, Smut?'

Smut pressed a little closer to the boy's side, giving a monosyllabic wag of his tail in answer to his master's words.

The slow minutes passed, and each moment the boy's hunger and weariness increased.

'Tain't o' no use, Smut,' he said at length, in a tone of dejection; 'we sha'n't sell to-night. 'Tis too windy fur the swells to smoke, and when 'tis so cold they won't unbutton their coats fur to take out a penny.'

The dog's tail drooped dejectedly, and he heaved a long sigh as he looked up questioningly into his master's face.

'Keep up yer pecker, ole man,' continued the boy, with forced cheeriness. 'We'll do better to-morrer, and we've spent a windy night on Blackfriars Bridge afore now.'

As he dragged himself wearily along the brightly-lighted Strand, he paused for a moment outside a confectioner's window. Flattening his face against the glass, he gazed hungrily at the roast beef and turkey and plum-pudding so temptingly displayed within. Through the grating from the kitchen below came savoury odours which filled the boy with longing, and the dog with restless excitement. They had eaten nothing since the morning, and in this fasting condition a night on Blackfriars Bridge was not a cheering prospect.

Two ladies walking quickly up the street were struck by the pathetic little figure. The brilliant light from the shop window fell full upon the small, pinched face and eager blue eyes, upon the untidy shock of reddish hair, and the fluttering rags. The look of hunger was unmistakable, and it moved the elder lady to pity.

'Stop him for a moment, Edith; I must get him something to eat,' she said, hastily entering the shop.

The pretty, fair-haired girl laid her hand on the boy's shoulder as he slowly turned away from the window.

'You are hungry?' she questioned, closely examining the intense little face upturned to hers.

He nodded emphatically, looking up with wondering eyes at this beautiful, low-voiced lady, whose cold, sweet tones seemed so full of tenderness to him.

'You are *often* hungry?' she continued.

''Most always,' he answered laconically.

'Well, here's a penny for you, and my friend will bring you out something to eat in a minute.'

The boy was too much surprised to answer, but his sharp eyes were full of gratitude as he awkwardly touched his cap.

'Should you like to earn threepence to-morrow morning?' she asked, still regarding the boy with eager interest.

'*Raather!*' he answered quickly. 'There ain't many things as I wouldn't do fur thripence.'

'Do you know where Suffolk Street is?'

'Second turning to yer right,' he said promptly.

'I live at the fifth house on the left-hand side as you go down,' she said slowly. 'Can you remember that?'

He nodded again, his face bright with intelligence as he followed her directions.

'I'll remember.'

'Come at eleven o'clock,' she said, 'and ask for Miss Munro. I am going to make a picture of you—send you to the Grosvenor

if you are a success. If you are a good boy you shall have threepence a day until the picture is finished.'

At this moment the other lady came out of the shop with a parcel in her hand.

'Here is something to eat, my boy,' she said, in a comfortable, motherly way. 'Take it home and have a good meal. Now, Edith, if you are ready.'

He watched them silently till they passed out of sight, his eyes round with astonishment.

'Here's a go!' he murmured, as he turned away from the brightly-lighted window. 'Thripence a day—why, I shall make my fortun'! Come, Smut, we'll find a doorstep and eat our supper. Oh, here's a go!'

Turning down a by-street, they soon found a sheltered doorstep, on which they seated themselves. Smut pressed close to his master's side, eagerly sniffing at the parcel which the boy proceeded to open with fingers trembling with excitement.

'Beef, *roast* beef! Ain't we in luck, Smut? And hot 'taters and bread! Oh, Smut, ain't she a stunner, and no mistake?'

The food was consumed in rapturous silence, while the icy wind swept by, unregarded by the happy pair in their sheltered corner.

'No nasty Bridge for *us*, Smut; she give me a penny, and we'll sleep in a jolly warm room to-night,' said the boy presently, holding out the greasy paper for the dog to lick. 'My eye! *ain't* we in luck? Thripence a day, Smut, that comes to one-and-six a week. Oh, sha'n't we be rich?'

Smut thumped his short tail loudly in response, and pushed his cold nose affectionately against his master's cheek.

'Thripence a day if I'm a good boy,' he went on reflectively. 'But, Smut, I *ain't* a good boy. I swear at the chaps when they call me "Carrots," and I lick 'em when they say you're a ugly brute. Good boys don't fight and swear. If she finds out as I ain't good, I s'pose she won't make a pictur' o' me no more—she'll stop the thripence a day. But she *sha'n't* find out, ole man. I'll tell her I'm a pious chap as goes to the Sunday school. Gentlefolks think a deal o' they, Smut. Ain't they green, just?'

At eleven o'clock next morning, he was admitted into the house in Suffolk Street by a neat maid-servant, who eyed him suspiciously as she curtly told him to follow her upstairs. He was shown into a large, barely-furnished room at the top of the house, where he found his friend of the previous night seated before an easel.

'Ah, there you are,' she said carelessly; 'and your little dog, too. What is his name?'

'Smut.'

'Smut? But he isn't black.'

'He's been washed,' explained the boy. 'He was awful black when I seed him first; that's why I called him Smut. But he don't mind, bless you. He's got the temper of a angel.'

'How was it he was so black when you bought him?' she asked indifferently. 'He is white now.'

'Didn't *buy* him,' he said; 'I fought fur him. 'Twas like this. When I was a little un, I seed two chaps with a pup they was agoin' to drown. They'd left him to starve in a coal-hole, but he *wouldn't* die, and so they were agoin' to drown him.'

'And you fought them?' questioned the girl. 'That was very brave of you.'

'There was nothing brave 'bout it,' he said hastily. 'I dared 'em to fight, one after t' other, and I licked 'em both. That's how I come to have Smut.'

'He ought to feel grateful to you,' she said. 'Now, will you stand on that platform, and turn towards the window?—That's right. Now, lean forward a little, just as you were when I saw you looking in at the shop last night.—That's capital. Stand just like that and keep as still as you can.'

For some minutes she worked silently, while the boy stood perfectly still, scarcely daring to move an eyelash.

'I think we may talk a little now,' she said at length; 'but don't move your head when you speak.'

'Right you are,' he returned, fixing his eyes steadily on the patch of murky sky visible through the window.

'What are you called?' she asked, standing back from the canvas and regarding her work critically.

'Tim,' he answered briefly.

'And what is your other name?'

'Ain't got no other,' he said. 'I'm just Tim.'

'Well, what is your father called?' she suggested a little impatiently.

'Ain't got no father; ain't got nobody but Smut.'

'Have you lost your parents long?' she said, with no touch of pity in the clear, low voice.

'Didn't lose 'em; never had none,' he returned indifferently.

'"'spect I grow'd,"' murmured the girl, suppressing a smile. 'But you are such a little boy to be alone in the world. Where do you live?'

'Streets, most times,' he said. 'Summer months we sleep out o' doors, Smut and me. But winter time we get a penny lodgin' when we're in luck.'

'And when you are not in luck?'

'Then we sleep on Blackfriars Bridge or the 'Bankment. The Bridge is warmest. There you *can* get a corner out o' the wind if you go early, before the best seats are took. On the 'Bankment 'tis fit to freeze yer marrer.'

'Wouldn't you feel happier in the Workhouse?' she asked carelessly, standing back once more to catch the general effect.

'Should be *better off* most like,' he returned quietly. 'But there ain't no place fur dogs in the 'Ouse, and Smut and me ain't agoin' to part.'

'Do you ever go to church?' questioned the girl, after a pause, fearing that he would grow restless if he did not talk.

'Constant,' said the boy, unblushingly; 'and we go to Sunday school reg'lar, Smut and me.'

'Smut, too?' she asked absently.

'Leastways, Smut waits fur me outside,' he said hastily. 'Oh, we're right down pious chaps, we are.'

'There, I have done for this morning,' she said presently, rising from her stool. 'Here is your money. I would give you more if I could afford it; but I am poor, like you. Can you come at the same time to-morrow?'

'Right you are,' he said, pocketing the pence slowly.

'Then I shall expect you at eleven. Good-bye—good-bye, Smut.'

II.

Edith Munro had a vivid recollection of Tim as she had beheld him in the Strand three weeks ago. The scene had impressed itself on her mind. The busy street, the flickering lamplight, the slender figure of the boy as he had stood with his face pressed close against the glass, looking with longing eyes into the brightly-lighted shop. But the picture had appealed to her imagination without in any way touching her heart; she had regarded the pathetic little figure as a possible 'subject,' but no tenderer feeling had moved her.

Tim posed as model in the Suffolk Street studio for some hours every day, and the painting was beginning to look life-like under the artist's skilful fingers. Encouraged by her careless questioning, the boy poured forth the whole of his pitiful history, unconscious that his words fell on inattentive ears. Nothing was hidden

from her. His poverty, his loneliness, his passionate love for Smut, all were laid bare before the girl, whose interest in him was purely selfish, whose questions were prompted solely by the desire to keep him quiet. Tim, however, was happily ignorant of her indifference, and her apparent sweetness awakened in him a devotion which filled his hungry little soul with enthusiasm. He thought of her as one far removed from the rest of the world—as a being free from every taint of evil. A sense of his own unworthiness took possession of him, and weighed heavily on his loving heart. He had told her that he was a good boy—that he went regularly to church and Sunday-school, and the remembrance of this had become unbearable to him.

As he walked slowly down Suffolk Street one morning, a mighty resolve formed itself in his mind. He ran upstairs hurriedly, fearing that his courage might forsake him if he gave himself time for thought, and his first feeling on finding the room unoccupied was one of disappointment. Smut curled himself up in his usual corner near the window, and Tim stationed himself before the easel, looking bitterly at the ragged figure which met his gaze.

'*You* a good boy!' he said, regarding the painting contemptuously. 'You look like it, don't you? Your little game's 'bout done, ole man; you'll soon see the last of *her*.'

He took his place quietly when she came in, his heart beating heavily under his ragged jacket as he gazed out silently upon the patch of grey sky. The unusual silence struck the girl, and she regarded him with something akin to interest as he stood there with the light falling upon his rigid little face.

'What makes you so quiet to-day, Tim? Has Smut been a bad dog?'

'No, it ain't Smut,' returned the boy drearily. 'It's *me* that's been bad.'

'Why, what have you done?' she asked, her eyes growing warm with amusement.

''Twas the very first day I come here,' he said, in the same dreary tones, never removing his gaze from the window. 'I told you a crammer; I said as how I went to church and to Sunday-school.'

'And it was not true?' she questioned lightly.

'Never been inside a church—'cept to warm myself,' he answered doggedly. 'Never been to Sunday-school in all my born days.'

'What made you tell such a story?' she enquired, the ludicrous side of the scene alone striking her.

'Wanted you to think I was a good chap,' he returned in a low, shamed voice. 'You said you'd give me thripence a day if I was a good boy.'

'And why do you tell me about it now?' she asked curiously. 'Is it because you know that I cannot finish the picture without you?'

'No, it ain't!' he answered roughly, looking round from the window for the first time.

'Why, then?'

'Don't know 'xackly, but it ain't that,' he said more quietly.

'Don't you know that it is very naughty to tell stories?' she questioned, with an uncomfortable sense that some rebuke was required of her.

'S'pose so,' he answered humbly.

'Well, we'll say no more about it,' she said vaguely. 'But don't do it again.'

When Tim entered the studio next day he found Miss Munro sitting before her easel, looking pale and languid.

'I shall not want you this morning,' she said wearily. 'I am not well enough to paint to-day.'

'You look awful white,' said the boy gently.

'You can come to-morrow, as usual,' she continued in the same subdued tone. 'I daresay I shall be fit for work to-morrow.'

'Hope you'll feel better soon,' he said, as he awkwardly moved away.

He walked slowly down the street and along the Embankment, his dog trotting close at his heels. A thin, grey mist hung over the river, veiling the opposite shore from view. As he looked thoughtfully across the stretch of water, his eyes absently followed a boat as it silently became visible out of the mist, and as silently melted away into it once more. Smut jumped up upon the wall presently, and sat there, looking down gravely into the gloomy water. Tim patted the dog with an absent air, and when he spoke his voice was low and sad.

'She said as how she was poor that first night,' he whispered brokenly, 'and I've never given it a thought! She lays out thripence a day on that pictur' 'cos she's agoin' to sell it. Just like me and my matches, only *her* money takes longer coming in.'

Smut was quick to read the sadness in his master's tone, and he pressed his head close against the ragged jacket with an inarticulate murmur of sympathy.

'You're sorry, ain't you, ole chap?' continued the boy wistfully. 'You love her too, don't you?'

Smut wagged his tail unenthusiastically. It was his private belief that his master overrated Miss Munro's charms.

'She's hard up,' said Tim, after a pause. 'She's *awful* hard up, Smut. She ain't got no money to buy any breakfast—that's why she looked so white. And *we* had bread and hot coffee!' he ended, with a sob.

For some minutes he was silent, his eyes wide and miserable as they rested on the grey stretch of water; but his face cleared presently, and a smile parted the small lips.

'I've got it!' he cried triumphantly, raising his arms from the wall. 'I'll tell her to-morrer. Come, Smut.'

It was with shy eagerness that Tim entered the studio next day. His little face was pale and pinched, for he had tasted no food that morning; but his expression was one of entire happiness. In his hand he carried a parcel done up in a dingy piece of newspaper, and this he proceeded to lay timidly upon the girl's lap.

'Why, what is it?' she questioned, regarding the boy curiously from her high stool as she sat before the easel. 'It feels quite hot.'

'It's—it's taters,' he said awkwardly.

'*Potatoes?*' she echoed in amazement.

'They're—I brought 'em fur you,' he explained, rubbing one thin leg against the other nervously. 'Most think roast 'taters prime!—I never touch 'em myself,' he added hastily; 'no more does Smut. Come here, sir!' as the dog snuffed longingly at the parcel still lying unopened on the girl's lap.

She looked helplessly from the parcel to the boy, and back at the parcel again, and then the room rang with her merry laugh.

'Thank you,' she said, as soon as she could speak. 'I—I will look at them presently. Will you put them in the fender—for the present?'

Tim experienced a vague feeling of disappointment as he silently obeyed. He had hoped to have the pleasure of seeing her eat these potatoes for which he and Smut had gone breakfastless this bitter morning, and her laughter had pained, without enlightening, him. He was almost glad when at length she told him that he might go, for he did not feel at ease in her presence to-day.

'Here is your money,' she said. 'It is sixpence this morning; I forgot to pay you yesterday.'

'Keep it,' he said awkwardly. 'Keep it till I ask fur it. I don't want thripence a day no longer. I'll ask fur it when I want it.'

'You want to save it up till it gets a big sum?' she questioned carelessly. 'You are going to buy something with it?'

'Yes,' he said eagerly; 'that's it. I'm agoin' to buy something.'

'Very well then, I will keep it for you safely,' she returned, replacing the money in her purse.

'And I'll ask fur it when I want it,' he repeated earnestly. 'You'll know as I don't want it if I don't ask fur it.'

Tim had never found it easy to pick up his scanty living, and the effort had been greater than ever of late. His small face regained its old, half-starved look as the days passed on, but he bore himself bravely in the presence of the girl for whom he was sacrificing so much, and she never noticed the change in him.

She told him one morning that she should not need him after that week, for the finishing touches were now all that the painting required. He received the news in silence, and for the few remaining days went about sadly, treasuring up every careless word that she uttered. His affection for Smut, too, seemed to deepen as the week drew to its close, and it was with passionate misery that he talked to the dog as he washed him that Saturday morning.

'It ain't 'cos I don't love you, Smut,' he said with a sob. 'You know that, ole man, don't you? And you won't forget me, *will* you, Smut?—P'r'aps I shall see you in the street some day, ole chap.—I shall come and look at the 'ouse constant.'

His little face was pale and set as he entered the studio, and there was a strained look in the wide blue eyes as he took his place before the window. The light fell softly upon the ragged figure, upon the warm-tinted hair, the rigid features; and the girl sitting near at hand saw it all, and felt only an artistic pleasure in her model. His poverty, his wretchedness, were nothing to her; he had fulfilled the service she had required of him, and would pass for ever out of her life when he left her room to-day.

'You said once as you felt lonesome at times,' he said at last, his eyes fixed earnestly on the window.

'Yes,' she agreed carelessly. 'It *is* rather lonely up here.'

He was silent again, looking steadily at the little patch of sky visible above the roofs of the houses opposite.

'Smut's a very good dog,' he continued presently. 'He ain't pertickler neither—anything as is agoin' does for Smut; and he's *that* patient when you're out o' luck!'

'He seems an inoffensive little dog,' she allowed, glancing at

the terrier as he lay under the window. 'Why, how white he looks to-day!'

'Been washed,' explained the boy briefly. 'He's a handsome dog, is Smut—when he's clean.'

'There, I think I have done with you now,' she said after a long silence. 'You have been a very good boy, Tim, and the picture is a great success.'

He descended from the platform slowly, and stood twisting his cap in his hands, while his lips twitched nervously.

'You can keep him, if you like,' he said awkwardly. 'He's very good company, Smut is.'

'Keep him?' she echoed carelessly. 'But don't you want him?'

'No,' he answered slowly. 'I—I'm tired o' Smut.'

'In that case he can stay,' she returned indifferently. 'I daresay he will not be much trouble.'

'He ain't a bit o' trouble,' said the boy wistfully. 'And he's very affectionate.'

'Well, he can stay,' she said. 'And here's your money, Tim; quite a large sum now, isn't it?'

'I—I don't want it,' he returned hastily. 'I said as how I'd ask fur it when I wanted it.'

'But you are not coming any more, you know. I have finished with you now.'

'I ain't got no place to put it to,' he said. 'I'm sure to lose it if I take it away.'

'Well, call for it when you want it,' she suggested. 'Then you can see Smut.'

'Yes,' he echoed with a strange smile; 'then I shall see Smut.'

He took the dog in his arms and smoothed the rough, white coat with tender fingers.

'Smut knows as he's got to stay,' he said, placing the little creature on the floor. 'I'll call fur the money when I want it.'

He stood in the doorway for a moment, taking a last, lingering look at the dog trembling in the corner—at the girl as she sat there, impatiently waiting for him to go, and then, with a short, dry sob, he went slowly down the steep staircase and out into the wintry street.

B. A. Key.

The White Mountains.

THEY are not white: not the least bit of it: they are green below—such a luscious green as I have seldom if ever seen elsewhere; while above, they look dark blue or purple in the dim distance, and sombre grey of a steely type when you come to examine their rugged boulder-strewn peaks at close quarters. Such at least we found them in July and August. No doubt to the early New Hampshire settlers, who gazed up at them from the semi-cultivated plain far off below, they showed white enough in all conscience, with their snowy coat, in December and January, or well on into the middle of April. I would not like to look upon them then; so much lonely solitude and native inhospitality would strike cold upon one's heart in the short grey days of American winter.

We started from that handsomest and best-managed of earthly hotels, the Windsor at Montreal—a palace of the Demos—on our pleasant pilgrimage to the White Mountains. The manager of the Windsor himself, most courteous of men, and a brother-writer of scientific tastes, saw us down to Bonaventure Station, and put us safely into the drawing-room car on the South-Eastern Railway through to Portland. Moreover, he passed our goods and chattels easily for us through the American custom-house *before* we started. This latter point I venture to mention in the dignity of italics, because it seems to me the absolute high-water mark of international comity in the nineteenth century. The St. Lawrence valley from end to end was made by nature (like the French Republic) one and indivisible; but what God had joined together, man and his politics have ruthlessly and absurdly put asunder. Between Montreal and the White Mountains an impalpable line, running in imagination straight across country, makes this half of a field or grove lie in Canada, and hands over that half with incongruous strictness to Vermont or New Hampshire. Not even a fence or hedge in many places marks the distinction between

the two countries; unless you happen to carry a sextant in your waistcoat pocket, and settle the latitude with minute accuracy by direct observation, you can't be certain as you take your walks abroad whether you are living at that moment under the jurisdiction of her most sacred majesty Queen Victoria or enjoy the privileges of a free and independent American citizen. This practical absurdity stares one in the face all along the Canadian and American border. Everywhere inconvenient lines of demarcation split up incongruously into two nationalities what is clearly one and the same natural country. However, the Canadians, being doomed to separation from the rest of America, have made the best of it, and have minimised the inevitable discomfort to travellers of the thrice abhorred custom-house system, by permitting the American customs officials to invade their territory, and to examine all baggage bound for the States *before* it leaves Montreal or Toronto. In other words, they allow a body of foreign agents permanently to occupy their own soil, and exercise in it a sovereign prerogative, for the sake of peace and quietness, and to the immense advantage of the travelling public. Thus, instead of stopping at the frontier station, as you have to do at Ventimiglia or Pontarlier, and having all your soiled linen tumbled out *en route* for public inspection, you get everything satisfactorily examined before starting, and proceed on your journey with an easy conscience. Until we attain the goal of annexation,[1] which is in my humble opinion the manifest destiny and only natural future of the Canadian Dominion, we may well be thankful for this unwonted relaxation of sovereign jealousy between neighbouring governments.

From Montreal, over the great Victoria Bridge, with just a glimpse of the bubbling and seething Lachine Rapids to westward, the line runs on through Lower Canada—torture itself will never induce me to abandon that fine old historical name for the stupid and new-fangled 'Province of Quebec'—to the swelling country on the Vermont border. The monotonous St. Lawrence plain gives way near Montreal to a broken hill region, of which the eponymous mountain of Mont Royal itself is but a last outlier, and these hills, in turn, form the subsiding buttresses of the twin range composing the Green and White Mountains. All North America, indeed (remarkable among continents for the sweet simplicity of its geographical and geological structure), has but two distinct mountain systems, one eastern and one western, between

[1] Μὴ γένοιτο.—Ed.

which lies the vast level basin of the Mississippi, with its tags, the prairie country, and the north-western grain-belt. The westernmost of these two systems, the backbone of the continent, bears throughout all its length the general name of the Rocky Mountains, though particular portions and lateral ranges have special titles like the Sierra Nevada, the Wahsatch, and the Selkirks. The easternmost system, far more ancient, but on that very account more wasted away and less imposing, starts as the Laurentian range in Canada; passes on into the States as the Green Mountains of Vermont, the White Mountains of New Hampshire, and the New York Adirondacks; runs southward as the Catskills, the Hoosacks, and the Hudson Highlands; reappears in Pennsylvania under its best-known general title as the Alleghanies; and finally subsides through the Black Mountains of Carolina and Georgia into the long flat peninsula and sandbanks of Florida. I apologise for the display of so much geographical learning; but English folk are sometimes weak-kneed in their American topography, and without some slight description of the general lay of the country around, it is impossible rightly to understand the special peculiarities of the White Mountains.

As we glided southward in our comfortable Pulman—the Americans *do* know the meaning of the word comfort—we got every moment deeper and deeper into the hill district, till somewhere about the village of West Farnham we crossed the impalpable line aforesaid, and found ourselves, without knowing it, in a foreign country. Its foreignness was soon amply demonstrated to our exploring eyes by the increased air of life and wealth about the country towns; for a cruel wrong has been inflicted upon Canada in this matter by its own sons, through their sentimental attachment to the British throne, its crown and dignity. They have cut themselves off, politically and socially, from all the advantages which would naturally accrue to them through the influx of American capital and American energy into the Dominion; and the consequence is that while the Vermont villages bear in their neat white houses and busy factories every mark of rapid and solid progress, their Canadian counterparts, just across the border, consist for the most part of the rudest log or frame houses, in every variety of discomfort, squalor, dilapidation, and decay. The untoward accident which severed Canada—then wholly French—from the liberated colonies during the revolutionary war has inflicted upon her ever since a lasting Nemesis by introducing into the New World an element of political distinctness,

of false aristocracy, of Old World prejudice, and of decadent European class-feeling which ought never to have obtained a foothold anywhere in a fresh and unburdened young continent.

Shortly after passing the border line we turned a corner in the hills, now almost rising to the dignity of mountains, and burst suddenly upon the exquisite expanse of Lake Memphremagog. It makes a lovely episode in the Vermont uplands. Memphremagog ranks, indeed, among the less known of American lakes; but in my judgment it stands first of all for picturesqueness of scale and variety of scenery. The great lakes of the St. Lawrence chain—Ontario, Erie, Huron, and so forth—which alone enter into the stock tour of European visitors, are from the scenic point of view flat, stale, and unprofitable to the last degree. They occupy the centre of the even and level St. Lawrence basin; their banks lie low, dull, monotonous, and uninteresting; their very vastness fails to impress the imagination, because it is the mere vastness of the sea on a smaller scale, and with less picturesque or lofty surroundings. Ontario, in fact, much resembles in size and aspect the German Ocean, and the view along its banks, from Hamilton to Kingston, closely counterfeits the view along the flat shore lands of Suffolk and Essex, about Aldeburgh or Clacton, with the addition of an occasional white cedar foreground. Even Champlain itself, beautiful as it is, and embowered all round in smiling hills or rugged mountains, errs, Yankee fashion, on the side of too great an area; one can hardly see both banks distinctly from the middle. Lake George, to be sure, is perfect in its way: a mountain tarn on a scale unknown in Europe, a Loch Katrine expanded almost to the size of Neuchatel, and studded with a hundred Ellen's Isles of extraordinary beauty. But yet Lake George even fails to produce the same effect of calm loveliness as Memphremagog, a sheet of smooth liquid silver, girt round by fantastic peaks of every imaginable shape or outline, and cut up into exquisite bays and reaches by projecting headlands of unusual grandeur. The railway runs for some miles together along the south-western shore, and affords passing glimpses of great beauty toward the high mountains of the northern or Canadian side. For of course the boundary line (as might be expected) bisects the lake across its narrow axis, producing an effect about as grotesque as if Bowness were a bit of England, but Ambleside and the upper half of Windermere generally were part and parcel of some foreign country.

At Newport, the capital of the Memphremagog tourist region,

beautifully situated on the south end of the lake, we stop about one o'clock for luncheon. No hurry of rushing to a crowded buffet where haughty young ladies with cropped fringes and frizzy hair find themselves too deeply engaged in agreeable badinage with beer-absorbing young gentlemen in ulsters to have any leisure left for serving stale sandwiches to the unobtrusive and retiring middle-aged traveller. Opposite the station, the Memphremagog Hotel opens wide its hospitable arms to receive us in its spacious dining-room. Half an hour or more is allowed for the square meal. We enter, and find, as is usual in America, a plentiful *table d'hôte* already spread, and neat-handed Vermont Phyllises, self-respecting and well-mannered daughters of the great republic, waiting behind our chairs, without flurry or bustle, to take our orders and supply our necessities. Tea and coffee smoke already on the table; fish and joints are hissing loudly through the kitchen hatch. At such a hotel you can eat your luncheon in peace and comfort, sitting down at your ease at a good solid table, and undisturbed by that perpetual expectation of the warning bell which poisons digestion at a European refreshment room. All countries have their strong and weak points, and on the whole England, I will confess, is quite good enough for me; but they certainly order these things better in America.

From Newport we ascend the valley of a mountain stream, choked with great baulks of timber from the forest around, but running through a lovely and wild country. Those logs that fill the little river were cut down on the slopes of the Green Mountains, here in Vermont, upon American territory, but they will go down through Memphremagog to the St. Lawrence, of which our stream is an ultimate tributary, and so be exported finally from Quebec to Europe in British bottoms. More division of the naturally unified; but I shall speak no further on that point in future, lest the reader should suspect me of being that worst and most insidious form of ecclesiast, a writer with a purpose. Half-way up the little river we pass a singularly beautiful and picturesque mountain lake—a mountain lake as big as Grasmere, and with steep wooded banks so richly endowed with crag and verdure that if it were in Europe a thousand artists would sketch it yearly, and ten thousand tourists would linger upon its shore. We wanted to know the name of this exquisite tarn, so I ventured to break the universal silence of our drawing-room car—American travellers, in spite of common opinion to the contrary, are even more reserved and reticent than English ones—and to ask the other

occupants of the Pulman whether they could give us its proper style and title. Not a soul on board (I speak American) had ever heard of it. I turned to the conductor, who passed it every day up and down on his journey. He had never asked what it might be called; it was just a lake, one of these lakes you have always in the mountains. He knew nothing more upon the subject. I looked it up in Appleton's Guide. Even the guide itself ignored it. So great is the wealth of scenery in America that Americans can afford to pass by without notice a sheet of water quite as beautiful as Bala Lake or Rydal Water, without ever so much as giving a name to it.

But if I travel at this slow rate (American trains are in no hurry) we shall never get to the White Mountains. Let us loiter no more *en route*. Suffice it to say, then, that after a delightful journey through the Vermont hills and the first outliers of the New Hampshire district, we came full in sight of Mount Washington itself about four o'clock in the afternoon. For some time past all trace of civilisation in the country around had died away entirely; for the White Mountains consist of a purely woodland tract, practically uninhabited during the winter months, and untenanted even in summer save by the tourist public and the hotel or railway people who wait upon its convenience. It is this curious isolation that gives these sporadic and spasmodic American pleasure resorts so different an air from anything European. In Wales or Scotland the higher lands are laid out in sheepwalks, or regularly stocked with deer and grouse; houses and barns, kirks and clachans, shepherds' folds and keepers' cottages, appear everywhere in the glens and valleys. In the Engadine or the Tyrol, smiling villages and Alpine pastures lie interspersed at every turn among the pine woods and the snow peaks. But in wild America all is wilderness, save the vast hotels that stand here and there at wide distances in their tiny clearings, like islands of civilisation in a boundless waste of primæval barbarism. So much is this the case, indeed, that some few years ago a forest fire swept through the valley just below the 'Presidential Range' of the White Mountains, and it was with difficulty that the great hotels themselves, in their ring of garden, were secured from the fierce onslaught of that blazing column.

Fabyan's is the first of these big hotels, a huge caravanserai of the true American type, standing bare and naked in a great opening of cleared ground (cleared for the sake of avoiding these very fire-risks), in full view of all the higher peaks of the New Hamp-

shire mountains. We had meant to stop there when we first planned our tour before leaving England; but our steadfast friend, the manager of the Windsor, recommended us to go on to Crawford's instead; and when we saw Fabyan's with our own eyes, we recognised at once the practical wisdom of his recommendation. I had as lief stop at a railway junction as at Fabyan's; indeed, it *is* just a railway junction, with trains from everywhere passing in front of the doors every ten minutes or so, and with a constant flood of eager tourists, every man Jack of them carrying in his hand his black valise (the regulation luggage of the American traveller), for ever pouring in and out of its uneasy portals. Crawford's lies but a few miles further on, in the gate of the Notch, as the chief pass through the mountains is picturesquely styled; and, though Mount Washington and the Presidential Peaks are hidden from it by a spur of the neighbouring hills, it looks out in front upon a pretty little lake, the head-waters of the Saco river, and stands surrounded by picturesque heights, like those that overhang the Holyhead Road at Bettws-y-coed, or those that tower above the profound gorge at Killiecrankie. Lest any man should suspect me of touting, I may add in confidence that all the hotels alike in the White Mountains are in the hands of a single firm of bold monopolists who have driven competitors clean out of the market, and now exploit the Presidential Range, with all its tourists, for their own sole use and benefit. The mountains are theirs, and all that in them is; so that from the purely commercial point of view it is quite indifferent to them whether any man goes to Fabyan's, or Crawford's, or the Summit, or Mount Pleasant, as fate or fancy carries.

At Crawford's, then, we pitched our headquarters, and found ourselves very comfortably ensconced in a hotel about as big as the Grand or the Métropole, but surrounded on every side by an utter jungle of primæval forest. A neat little railway station stands beside the hotel; otherwise, no other human habitation is anywhere in view, nor can you reach any without taking the train to Fabyan's in one direction or to the Willey House below in the other. In front stretches a little lake and a small lawn; but just beyond, the mountains rise precipitously from the narrow glen, clad from top to bottom with magnificent woodland. Footpaths lead up several of the torrents, which are in character not unlike those at Dolgelly; though the woodland itself and its undergrowth of vegetation are utterly dissimilar to anything that can be seen anywhere in Europe. Huge moss-clad trunks strew the

ground, each one lying just where it fell and mouldering away into deep black earth, on which maidenhair ferns and rich forest lilies flourish luxuriantly. Never, save in the West Indies, have I seen such a glorious native woodland flora. The foliage formed its chief attraction: large-leaved bush foliage, like that of a conservatory, but growing in wild luxuriance over crag and tree trunk, filling the niches of rock by the watercourses with its broad verdure, and carpeting the soil everywhere with an exquisite pattern of rich glossy green. It was indeed a sight to gladden a botanist's eyes; and when one adds to it the deep blue berries of the clintonia lilies, the strange triangular flowers of the trilliums, the great bunches of Indian cucumber, and Solomon's seals, and smilacinas, and rattlesnake plantain, I need hardly say that the undergrowth of woodland plants on the mountain side was almost tropical in its abundance and magnificence.

Through this log-encumbered, moss-grown, lily-dappled forest, the mountain torrents course down in sheets of silvery foam from granite barrier into granite basin. On every side around Crawford's, a few minutes' walk up any one of the pretty little brooks that converge towards the valley would lead one at once to some unmarred and unsophisticated cataract. Gibb's Falls lie on the east of the hotel, high up the flanks of a shoulder of Mount Washington itself. Beecher's Falls, so called because the great New York sensational preacher is said to have taken an involuntary dip in the basin at their feet, stand opposite on the slopes of Mount Lincoln. All are 'lovelier than their names,' for, indeed, local nomenclature is not the *forte* of the great free American people. By some admired mischance, they have christened all the highest peaks of these White Mountains after presidents or other distinguished American statesmen, displacing for the purpose the beautiful and characteristic old Indian names; so that now, instead of Chocorua and Ossipee, we get such obtrusive monsters as Mount Jefferson, Mount Adams, Mount Madison, and Mount Webster. It is for this reason that the main central *massif* of the White Mountains (to use the good and expressive French term for which we possess as yet no English equivalent) bears the singular title of the Presidential Range.

Life at Crawford's was amusing and varied. But it was very different from our English ideal of a country holiday. We solitude-loving Britons keep ourselves always on the look-out for a very retired and unhackneyed seaside place, a gap in the cliffs

with a coastguard cottage and a single lodging-house, where we may commune with nature undisturbed to our heart's content. But our American brother escaped from town loves rather a big hotel, on whose verandah he may sit and idly rock himself; and when he wants to commune, he communes rather with his intelligent and loquacious fellow-citizen. Nevertheless, it was good as change. Crawford's supplied us with an excellent table, where our waiter was a young man from Amherst College, Massachusetts, who earned money during his summer vacation to keep him at Amherst through the winter session. A self-respecting, sharp, businesslike young man, indeed, that waiter, conscious of no degradation in the employment he accepted, and to our eyes thereby really making 'that and the action fine.' Similarly, the waitresses were for the most part active and good-looking New England school teachers—the 'school-marms' of fiction—picking up an honest livelihood during their long holiday in the mountain region. It gave them, besides wages, the advantages of occupation, society, change of air, pretty scenery, and the off-chance of marrying an Amherst student. We got quite intimate with our own waiter, who would pause after dinner, napkin in hand, and discuss his studies with us in perfect good faith, showing not the slightest symptom of false shame or even timidity, but ingenuously interested in us as live specimens of the European university training. There was something noble and republican and deserving of high esteem in it all; and yet somehow one regretted, on the other hand, that youths and maidens struggling upwards in such praiseworthy fashion towards a liberal education should have to struggle through such sordid and unbecoming surroundings. Our thoughts reverted involuntarily to Oriel quad and Magdalen cloisters, and we thanked God after all, in spite of everything, that we were born Englishmen. The position of waiter is a useful and meritorious one, but it lacks expansiveness.

In the evening all Crawford's (as we say *tout Paris*) assembled in the drawing-room for music and dancing. But here we noted that the dancers were mostly mere children, not adults, as I remember to have seen in hotels at Niagara or Fort William Henry on all my previous American visits. Whether this means that the American girl is growing with time more shy and retiring I do not know; I trust I may venture without rudeness to say I hope it does. At any rate, the American old maid, learned and cultured, was present in very astonishing force, and did not retire; on the contrary, she struck dismay into the timid

breasts of all our party by the bold and aggressive front she presented to the intrusive Britisher. What erudition! What versatility! What research! What omniscience! She knows intuitively all about the ideas of Hegel and the Hittite inscriptions, the morphology of Limulus and the exact place in philological classification of the Ostiak dialect of the Tungusian language. Such wisdom affrights the soul of the poor empirical Englishman, who is conscious to himself of having only received the ordinary university education, and of acquiring nothing by the light of nature without the aid of some slight cursory preliminary study. *You* know nought of Spinoza's ethics, and are doubtful as to the precise date to be assigned to the Accadian invasion of Mesopotamia. You slink and cower before the face of a woman who can volubly discuss books she has never read, criticise pictures she has never seen, and quote languages of whose pronunciation and accent she is as entirely innocent as that well-known metaphorical personage, the babe unborn.

Nevertheless, in spite of the omniscient old maids with their blue spectacles, and the eminent lawyers with their profound convictions, life at Crawford's went on as a whole very pleasantly. The two great excursions are the run down the Notch, and the trip by a Rigi railway up to the summit of Mount Washington. The Notch may be taken as a very good specimen of a snowless mountain pass: a deep and narrow gorge or chasm between two opposite precipitous cliffs, which look, of course, as if they had been 'rent asunder by some terrific convulsion of nature' (quotation from all the guide-books), but have really, I need hardly say, been worn down to their present depth by the slow cutting action of the little stream that still feebly trickles down their centre. You can drive through the Notch in a White Mountain waggon, if you have a taste for dangerous and adventurous performances; we did, and we felt at the finish much like the Yankee who went down a toboggan slide at the Montreal Carnival, and exclaimed at the end of his trip, 'I wouldn't have missed that for a hundred dollars!' 'Then try another one,' suggested an enthusiastic Canadian friend. 'I wouldn't try another,' answered the Yankee decisively, 'not for ten thousand.'

In fact, the roads of the White Mountains remain to this day in the same embryonic and proleptic condition as those of the Scotch Highlands before the wayfarer from southern shires had cause to bless the name of General Wade. They have been sketched or foreshadowed (I won't say made) entirely for the benefit of the hotel guests, who form the sole population of the

mountain region; and they run straight up and down hill, with wonderful ruts and marvellous 'butter-bowls' sufficient to strike amazement and awe even into the triple-brass-bound breast of a South American mule-driver. Long waggons full of tourists dash madly along these rocky tracks, all agog like the Gilpin household, and often arrive at their journey's end without experiencing any serious casualty. To say the truth, roads are practically unknown even in the civilised portions of America. The railway has preceded them, and so effectually checked their free development; whereas in Europe great engineering works like the Simplon and the Holyhead Road preceded and heralded the advent of the railway system. When one compares these rickety White Mountain tracks with the magnificent gradients of the Corniche or the St. Gothard, the easy drive over the Brünig, or Telford's splendid highways through the Scotch Highlands, the difference is nothing less than grotesque. In America the towns are quite too civilised, but the country still remains one vast blank of almost untouched and primitive barbarism.

A pleasanter way of seeing the Notch is to take the rail; for the Portland and Ogdensburg line runs right through the whole length of the pass, along a narrow ledge cut at a high elevation on the steep sloping and landslipping sides of Mount Willard and Mount Willey. Open-air 'observation cars,' with neat wicker-work basket chairs, are attached to the train for this portion of its route; and the view down into the profound gorge below, with the Saco forming a lost silver thread in its very middle, is certainly most grand and impressive. It reminds one of Killiecrankie, and, in a less degree, of the Val d'Aosta.

But the great trip from Crawford's, as from all the other White Mountain hotels, is of course the excursion up Mount Washington. The actual summit does not rise so very high—only a little above 6,000 feet—but it ranks as the greatest elevation in Eastern America this side the Rockies (bar some obscure and unvisited Carolinian hills), and Americans generally feel a paternal pride in its name and features. You go up in a cog-wheel railway with a crooked staggering Rigi engine, all off the perpendicular when it comes to rest; and the track runs through wild forest, spanning endless gorges and torrents by the way on those light, impossible American trestles, which one feels sure can never bear the weight of the train, until one has crossed over them and seen them do it. The day we went up a forest fire had broken out on the slopes, and as we came down again the flames had almost reached one of the boldest among these

slender wooden viaducts, known, I think, by the suggestive name of Jacob's Ladder. A gang of workmen, armed with axes and hatchets, were eagerly fighting fire with fire, cutting down and burning all the trees immediately around the base of the trestle, in the difficult endeavour to clear a space around it before the onward march of the flames had reached the neighbourhood of the actual woodwork. Smoke and blaze seemed almost to envelop us as we passed through; but the trestle appeared not one penny the worse, nor did we hear the next day that any repairs had been rendered necessary by the damage due to fire.

Slight as is the elevation of Mount Washington, it rises quite high enough in the rigorous climate of New Hampshire to carry one successively through several distinct climatic zones, as one mounts, and to bring one at last to the limit of trees before arriving at the actual summit. As we went up, though it was full July, we found the Canadian spring flowers one by one returning to us. We could measure our height first by trilliums, then by cornel, next by violets, last of all by dog's-tooth lily, blood-root, and hepatica. The top itself consists of bare and rugged rock, strewn with huge, shapeless micaceous boulders, the *débris* of ages and of the glacial period. Indeed, a glacial fauna and flora still cling to the heights. Polar butterflies, stranded there at the end of the Great Ice Age, keep up to this day the lineal succession of their little colony, though no others of their kind are again to be found in all America till you reach the frozen shores of Labrador. The plants are every one of arctic species, bearing such suggestive names as *Arenaria Greenlandica*, or *Diapensia lapponica*, which sufficiently attest their high northern origin. A very Alpine aspect is given to the whole flora by the prevalence of such flowers as the little creeping Caithness Sibbaldia, the Norwegian cloudberry, the Swiss brook-saxifrage, the arctic bog-bilberry, the frigid potentilla, and the mountain epilobe. All these plants were once common glacial species; they have struggled on here among the clouds and snow after more southern types have long overrun the whole lowland and hill country around them. Indeed, the most northern kinds of all are strictly confined to a tiny belt around the summit itself, extending only some six or eight hundred feet down the combes and corries.

Once upon a time Mount Washington was much bigger than it is to-day. All these White Mountains are at present mere 'basal wrecks' of once far larger peaks, worn down by age and by the grinding ice-sheet of the glacial epoch. Being very old they are, of course, now very low; for mountains reverse the usual rule,

and, following the example of little Miss Etticoat in the nursery rhyme, grow smaller as they live longer. It is new mountain ranges that are big and high; the aged ones are always worn down almost flat by the ceaseless action of rain and weather, frost and water-courses. Mount Washington is a specimen in its last dotage.

'The view from Mount Washington,' says my guide-book, with pardonable enthusiasm, 'is incomparably grand.' As a matter of fact, it is a good view, but still quite comparable, and not good enough in proportion to the elevation. You are at the same height as on top of the Rigi; but oh, *ciel*, what a difference! Mount Washington towers as the actually highest peak anywhere around; whereas the Rigi stands a mere observatory in the centre of a girdle of mountains all infinitely grander and nobler than itself. I don't want to make 'odorous' comparisons about the incomparable; I merely mean that, all things considered, the view from the American mountain is not quite so fine as one might naturally have expected it to be for its height above sea-level. For one thing, there is little or no water in sight, only a stray lake or two shimmering pond-like in the remoter distance. No near tarns, as in the deep combes of Snowdon; no sea, as from Ben Nevis and Helvellyn; no winding meres, as when one looks down on Lucerne and Zurich; rather a tumultuous mob of surging mountains, like the serried ranks of Deeside hills from the top of Lochnagar. Still, I will frankly admit it is a magnificent prospect in its own way. Westward through the faint blue haze, the Camel's Hump and the Green Mountains of Vermont loom indistinctly on the cloudy horizon. Eastward, the other great peaks of the Presidential Range—Jefferson, Adams, Madison—rise to above the limit of trees, and with their gaunt bare summits of loose-strewn boulders remind me more of Cader Idris and of the Coudon near Toulon than of any other masses I have seen anywhere. Southward, the more wooded and rounded tops of Kearsarge and its giant neighbours recall rather St. Catherine's Peak and the Blue Mountains of Jamaica. Yes, on second thoughts, I *will* compare: for, after all, a large part of the pleasure of scenery lies in just such conscious recognition of likeness with well-remembered views that have given one similar pleasure before; and those whose standard has been most widely formed get, I suppose, most enjoyment out of this half-instinctive process of reminiscence and comparison.

On the summit stands, I need hardly say, a gigantic hotel, 'run' by the proprietors of Crawford's and Fabyan's. This is

very good business; because, by the American uniform system, you have to pay for your dinner and rooms at the hotel below, and if you go up Mount Washington you pay over again for your meals and bed at the summit: so that Messrs. Barron, Merril, and Barron get it out of you twice over. However, it is worth paying; for I have seen nothing in wonderful America more wonderful, as a piece of organisation, than that hotel on the summit of Mount Washington. The wind outside is blowing at the rate of a hundred miles an hour. The thermometer at the United States' Signal Station hard by barely marks a degree or two above freezing. The clouds are swirling and eddying and dancing around the dark and gloomy peaks of Mount Madison. A trackless forest-clad region, just broken by two or three big hotels, stretches for miles and miles at our feet. But inside, you are once more simply and solely in New York or Philadelphia. Three hundred hungry tourists are taking their regulation square meal at the accustomed hour in the immense dining hall, six thousand feet above sea level. Fresh fish from the Atlantic and the rivers; entrées and made dishes and pastry as at Delmonico's; joints and vegetables in hopeless intermixture; fruits from the South, the Middle States, and New England; ices and coffee, wines and liqueurs, foreign sweetmeats and indigenous 'candy,' load the tables on every side of us. As far as profusion and variety goes, you couldn't get a better or more carefully selected meal at the Continental in Paris. I reserve the question of cuisine, not because it is not admirable in its way, but because it is rather American than European—a trifle crude in certain of its developments. It includes an instrument of torture known as pie; and one must draw the line somewhere.

Altogether the White Mountains are a mass of almost unbroken and primitive wilderness, penetrated and pervaded from end to end by great railways, dotted about at convenient distances with monster hotels, and supplied in part with rude tracks which somewhat simulate the function of highways; but in all essentials as native and unsophisticated to the present day as Scotland was in the days of Galgacus.

Here more than anywhere else one sees in perfection the startling contrasts of American life—urban civilisation at its highest pitch, side by side and cheek by jowl with rural barbarism in its utmost intensity.

GRANT ALLEN.

Undertones.

SHE.

SO you've had a happy time,
  Traveller so queerly brown—
After scenery sublime,
  Don't you hate the dusty town ?
And that girl you left at Rome—
  Surely, parting was a blow—
There's no solace here at home!
  (*Did he ever love me? No!*)

HE.

Well, it was not such a change
  From the old familiar sphere—
Glaciers didn't seem so strange,
  For it's rather icy here!
But that girl—ah! she was sweet,
  Simple as a maid from school,
No coquette, all stale conceit!
  (*And I loved you—what a fool!*)

SHE.

Simple! Yes—and very good—
  Trust a girl to know her cue—
Artful piece of maidenhood,
  Posing as an *ingénue*!
You who boast your subtle wit,
  Take upon the merest show
Any little hypocrite!
  (*O my heart, I loved him so!*)

HE.

Don't malign my Roman rose—
  Candour is her sweetest bloom!
I have found the merest shows
  Not at Rome, but in this room!
Once I cherished here what seemed
  Truest heart divinely kind—
Now I know I only dreamed!
  (*Jove! She's jealous, or I'm blind!*)

SHE.

Strange! For I've been dreaming too—
  Such a foolish little jest—
For I thought that some one knew
  He was dearer than the rest!
Dreams are dead—why should we care?
  For we wake and we are wise!
Is your Roman dark or fair?
  (*O my dearest, read my eyes!*)

HE.

Yes, we wake with clearer gaze—
  Mists of pique and pride are flown!
Darling, how I grudge the days
  When I did not claim my own!
Tell me, sweetheart, with your lips
  I am he you hold so dear,
So that joy knows no eclipse!

SHE.

Shall we go to Rome next year?

L. F. AUSTIN.

The 'Donna' in 1886.

I.

By the Author of 'Charles Lowder.'

THE gracious work of the 'Donna,' the blue-robed lady who has found fresh woods and pastures new by London Bridge, has been more than ever comforting to the most comfortless since, twelve months ago, some account was given to the readers of Longman's Magazine of the result of their large and persevering liberality. They may perhaps remember that in the March number of the magazine there was a notice that, 'in view of the great distress prevailing at the East of London, portions of food are now being sold at one farthing instead of a halfpenny,' a temporary measure for relief during the crisis caused by bitter late frosts and lack of work. No marvel there was such a crisis, when the London papers announced that just then eight thousand men were daily refused work at the Docks. And the work of the 'Donna' is for the unemployed. It was at this time that one who knew that she was maintained by the readers of this magazine determined to pay a visit to the Docks.

'I resolved,' the visitor writes, 'that my first visit should be to this particular food-truck. So I took the train to Mark Lane, and in a few minutes found myself standing by the little iron hut which shelters the Sisters from the weather, as day by day they dispense hot dinners to their miserable customers.

'A Sister, who had just established herself behind the smoking tins of soup and stew, and piles of suet and currant pudding, gave me kind welcome, and began to explain a little of what was going on around us; but our talk was interrupted by a crowd of men running up to the stall, throwing down their money, and calling out, "Ha'porth of stew," "Pen'orth of soup," "Slice of pudding," &c. I tasted both soup and stew, which were excellent. But my attention was entirely called away from the eatables to the customers for whom they were provided. It was just twelve

months since my last visit, and there was a sad falling off in the appearance of the patrons of the "Donna." Their clothes were more ragged, their faces more pinched, their forms more bony, their whole look more dejected and hopeless. One was the nearest approach to a skeleton I had ever seen, even in a hospital. The Sister told me he had just re-appeared after an absence of several weeks. "Poor fellow! where can he have been," she said, "to look like that?"

'Many a scarecrow would have blushed to own the clothes which covered these poor dockmen this bitter February day. Indeed, there were so many holes in their coats, that they must have dropped off altogether had they not been fastened here and there with twine. What their sufferings must have been I cannot write of. It was one of the coldest days I ever remember. The ground was like iron, and a heavy, yellow river fog seemed to penetrate to one's very bones. My limbs seemed slowly turning to ice, and a comfortably clad policeman gave visible tokens of distress by stamping about and slapping his breast incessantly. As I looked around I thought my eyes had seldom rested on a more dismal scene. The men were now crowding round the Sister, their hands trembling as they took the basins of soup, and their teeth chattering audibly. The man who had wheeled the truck gave them spoons, and more salt if they needed it. They had hardly finished their frugal repast when the policeman called out, "Now, lads! now's your chance!" and they all rushed to the dock-gates, above which a man's head had just appeared waving two or three tickets.

'Then ensued the scene which has been so often described—a crowd of men struggling, fighting, shouting, entreating for work, urging every sort of plea why they should be engaged for the afternoon. Hard repulsive work, paid for at the rate of fourpence an hour, eagerly coveted! The few tickets were soon disposed of, and the other labourers retired, looking even more woebegone than before. But there was one gleam of brightness in store for our poor unemployed. Calling the men round her, the Sister told them that, in consequence of times being so hard, the soup would from that day forward be sold at half its former price, and a piece of bread given in. It was really a surprise to me to see the smiles that broke over those wan weary faces.

'"Well, that is charity," said one. "Long life to ye," shouted an Irishman. But most of them only nodded their heads with a pleased expression, and sigh of thankful approval. Would that

those who have so liberally contributed to the support of the "Donna" could have seen with their own eyes the joy of the starving dockmen when, having pushed across their penny or halfpenny, half the sum was returned to them. Some of them at once bought extra food. "God bless you!" cried one, "good times are coming." "Missus," said another, "there's a lot of our chaps as can't find even a ha'penny to buy their dinners with, but now, as you've changed the price to a farden, it'll be a different game altogether."

'"A basin of soup for this here poor fellow, Sister," said a decent-looking man, who came up with a wretched-looking creature in tow. Then seeing the starved looks of a number standing by with their hands in empty pockets, he treated twelve of them to a dinner. "Oh, shut up, there," he said, when they began to thank him, "I'm only a poor working-man myself, but the Lord has been very good to me, or I should not have the money to treat you with." Then, pulling off his hat, "Now, mates, off with your hats, for I don't think the Lord will think too much of our thanks with our hats on." He then in simple words gave thanks for the food, the men responding with a reverent and hearty Amen.'

Since this visit to the 'Donna,' she has taken up her quarters at London Bridge, where her customers gather in crowds in hopes of getting a job on one of the busy wharves under London Bridge. Many a man, on being just served, has said, 'God bless you, ma'am, for this 'ere truck; that's the first bit of hot food I have tasted to-day, and it'll have to last me till to-morrow.'

There have been, during the last month, more out-of-work men at the 'Donna' than at any of the other food-trucks during the year. The men are so closely packed together in the yard where the food is served as to make it most difficult for them to move their arms to feed themselves when they have succeeded in getting their soup.

During the last month the following quantity of food has been sold at the 'Donna' at London Bridge:—

Basins of soup	456
Basins of stew	5,820
Slices of pudding	6,048
Portions of bread and meat	820
Slices of cake	743
Dumplings	382
Number of men served	13,779

and the following quantity at the 'Don,' Tower Hill:—

Basins of stew	2,264
Slices of pudding	1,836
Portions of bread and meat	321
Slices of cake	450
Dumplings	340
Number of men served	4,828

During the blackberry season, such quantities of fruit were sent to the Sisters, that they were able to add blackberry dumplings to the usual fare, which were much valued, judging by the rapidity with which they disappeared.

A great deal of pulling down and building up is going on all round this food-truck just now, in preparation for the new Tower Bridge, and there is no doubt that many of our usually out-of-work men have had some odd jobs, for our customers have considerably decreased at the 'Don.' Great fears are expressed on all sides lest the new bridge should sweep away the 'Don.' 'Oh, Sister! hope this won't be moved; for whatever should we do without it?' 'I heard of you first, Sister, out in foreign parts,' said a new visitor one day, 'and I made up my mind I'd find you out when I got back, and here I am. My! but this hot stuff is fine of a cold day!'

I cannot be afraid that the kind readers who do not weary of giving to support the 'Donna' will weary of hearing, year by year, of those whose deep poverty they lighten; but I do sometimes fear lest we should be accused of 'sensational' writing about the East End unemployed, and would fain entreat our friends and most kind helpers to believe that the difficulty is to choose amongst the 'ower true tales' of sorrow and want which come in hundreds to our ears. The saddest cases, next to sickness, are those longing, but unable, to find work. 'Sister, I've just applied again to the Union,' said one poor fellow, 'to see if they won't take in two of my children. 'I've four, and they say I must come in myself with them; but I'm willing enough to work if they'll let me be, only it's hard while I'm waiting for a job to see the little ones starving.'

One very ragged man brought two bunches of wild flowers to the 'Donna.' 'I've not got a single halfpenny,' he said, 'but I'm so hungry; will you take these, Sister, and give me a bit of something?' Three times while the Sister was pouring out the soup he tried to stop her, thinking he was getting more than the worth of the flowers; and when he had finished his soup he

disappeared up the steps leading to the bridge, returning again directly with three more bunches. 'Sister, take these, please; I should like you to have them. I don't want nothing for them; I have tramped up from the country, and gathered them on the way.' Guessing that his wife and children were waiting for him on the bridge, as women are not served at the men's trucks, the Sister gave him some pudding to take to them. The flowers were afterwards distributed to the ragged-school children at St. John's. Another man had just sold his waistcoat for a penny to get some pudding for his wife and child.

One day, as the Sister entered the shelter, she noticed a poor 'foreigner' lying on the ground, rolled up in a rug. He seemed perished with cold and hunger. Some of the men tried to cheer him up, and tempt him to eat some of their soup; but he seemed past caring for food. 'Ah, well!' said one, as he turned away; 'there'd be more of us lying there if it wasn't for this 'ere "shanty," I reckon.'

One poor fellow, who never seemed to get any work, when asked by the Sister how he managed most days to have a halfpenny, said, 'No one will give me work, Sister; so I just beg about till I get a halfpenny, and then save it till I come down here. Thank God for all His mercies! I say; but most of all for this concern.'

'Can't think what heaven will be like to the "rich," who have all they can want here,' said one of our customers. 'I don't believe they'll enjoy it like we poor chaps will, if we ever get there. They'll have to have something specially prepared for them, after their comfortable fireside, and sofas, and easy-chairs.'

In consequence of the terrible and increasing destitution 'down at the docks,' the Sisters opened lately a work-room for the literally starving wives of the unemployed, and for widows with children. They only earn one-and-sixpence a week at this workroom; 'yet,' a Sister writes, 'that is the sum which we are begged and implored on all sides to allow them to earn: it makes one's heart ache to have to refuse, when we see with our own eyes the truth of a tale of want and misery. The appeals were so constant and urgent, we were forced to open our work-room, though we had but little money in hand for it.' 'Oh! are there not many,' she adds, 'who would send us one-and-sixpence a week, with which to give this much-coveted treasure, *work*, to one poor soul? The distress this winter will be worse than last year, to judge by what we see around us on all sides. If only

one-and-sixpences drop in constantly through the letter-box at 42 A Dock Street, E., we shall be able to do a little towards stemming the tide of what is even now an overwhelming sea of starvation.'

These are the words of one *living* amongst those whom she tries to aid, and knowing the individual circumstances of each case of distress.

But there are bright gleams of comfort, and not least from that which has grown out of the work of the 'Donna.' 'Sister, you don't know what a lot of good this 'ere stall's done,' said one working man. 'It's done more good among us fellows this end of London than anything else. I'm going to speak at our temperance meeting to-night, and you may be sure I shall not forget to speak of this.' It is quite an everyday occurrence for some of the head men to distribute dinners among the unemployed who are waiting for them to give them a job. The ice merchant at London Bridge brought 1*l.* as a donation to the 'Donna,' saying, 'I have more pleasure in giving it than you can have in receiving it; and if ever the food is running short for want of money, be sure you send to me, and you shall have another pound.' It is not at all an uncommon thing now to see a poor starved-looking man share his 'ha'porth' with two or three others; and there are always a number of barefooted boys gathered round the entrance, knowing well, that as the men pass out, they will hand them their basins with a little soup and bits of pudding left within them. However little there may be, it is, as a rule, shared by all the boys. One little fellow, about four years old, broke a piece of pudding given to him into three, and, before touching his own portion, gave the other two to his father and mother, who were sitting on the pavement. Two other men then gave him the remainder of their pudding, but each piece was again divided, the child showing the greatest delight at having it to take to his parents.

'One of the pleasantest sights down at the Docks just now,' a Sister writes, 'is our weekly gathering of unemployed men and dock labourers every Thursday evening from seven to eight. We never have less than a hundred men, and often more.'

A quarter of an ounce of tobacco, with a cup of coffee and slice of bread and butter, is given to each visitor, and they seem thoroughly to value their hour's enjoyment—smoking, singing songs, and reciting—especially on 'concert nights,' when two ladies come to play and sing to them. At eight, all who wish to go do so; a short mission service is then held by the Sisters, at

which the numbers vary from sixty to ninety, the greater number being genuine dock-labourers and unemployed, in their rags and tatters; but there is also a good sprinkling of sailors and divers nationalities, men who, as a rule, never go to church, and never will so long as they have but one suit of clothes, well besmeared with grease and dirt, and riddled with holes. That they care for this service is evident, as week after week the same faces are there, and some twenty have given in their names for an instruction class in preparation for Holy Communion, and attend it on another evening in the week. Some of the men asked if there was anything for them to come to on Sundays, so we have begun a mission service for them on Sunday evenings. Not long ago a sailor who had been here for some weeks asked for a Bible, as he was going to sea. 'I never thought of these things before,' he said; 'but thank God for bringing me here. I shall never forget what I have heard. May God bless you, Sister! I shall be sure to come again when I return to England.'

The patrons of the 'Donna' may, indeed, thankfully feel that they have done much to gladden and comfort hearts as well as bodies, and to alleviate suffering amongst the very most needy in the great wilderness of England's chief city:—

> In London, that great sea, whose ebb and flow
> At once is deaf and loud, and on the shore
> Vomits its wrecks, and still howls on for more.
> Yet in its depth what treasures!—SHELLEY.

II.

BY THE EDITOR.

IN presenting the annual Statement of Account of 'The Donna' Fund, the Editor is again able to congratulate the subscribers on a successful year's work. The severe and long-protracted frost last year caused a great scarcity of employment, and much distress ensued. The 'Donna' and the other trucks for the unemployed are the pressure gauges of the East-End labour market, and a reference to the subjoined table will show, by the

large increase of men served in the months of March and April, the effect of the severe season. When summer at last arrived the customers of the 'Donna' diminished, and in August we were able to close. The Sisters found, in the autumn, that the services of this truck at the west end of Tower Hill were fortunately less needed than in former years, and, with the consent of the Editor, they moved her to the neighbourhood of London Bridge. Here they are terribly wanted, as the figures for September and October show. It is evident that the supporters of the 'Donna' are now within hearing of a more urgent cry for help than even that which was heard from the western end of Tower Hill, and that although the finances are at present very flourishing, they will be severely strained. The Editor has no fear that the support hitherto given so freely will fail now. Besides the subscriptions given to the 'Donna,' the Editor has received and forwarded to the sisters certain sums for other branches of their work. These are specified in the Statement of Account. Fourteen pounds six shillings and sixpence have also been received for the little cripple 'James' (Willie Hardingham), and paid to the Sisters. When his time was up at the Clifton Home, his case being pronounced curable, he was sent to the Hospital for Paralysis in Bloomsbury Square, where he is doing well. The Editor has received the following letter respecting him:—

The Mission House, Rotherhithe, S.E., November 9, 1886.

DEAR SIR,—We believe you were anxious to have particulars about Willie Hardingham. The little lad is better, and can get up and play about a little at times. He is going away very soon to a Convalescent Home, and we think some warm clothing which we hope to get for him will be very acceptable—especially now as his mother is quite out of work.

We are very grateful to you for all your goodness and the great interest you have taken in the little boy.

We are, dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

Sr Y., for the Sisters of the Church.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT.

1885. RECEIPTS.	£	s.	d.
Oct.—Amount brought forward . . .	392	8	7½
Nov.—By food sold . .	1	16	5½
Dec. ,, . .	4	13	11
1886.			
Jan. ,, . .	6	4	10½
Feb. ,, . .	5	8	4
March ,, . .	8	11	10
April ,, . .	5	3	7¼
May ,, . .	4	3	9
June ,, . .	2	14	2
July ,, . .	2	11	7
Sept. ,, . .	12	14	3½
Oct. ,, . .	28	14	1½
Subscriptions this year to 'Donna'	196	5	1
Subscriptions for the little Cripple	14	6	6
Subscriptions for the 'Don' and other trucks . .	8	10	6
Subscriptions for the Orphanage	5	0	0
Total . .	699	7	7¾

1885. EXPENDITURE.	£	s.	d.
Nov.—To cost of Food, Wages, Rent, and Repairs . .	4	2	11
Dec. ,, . .	13	10	4
1886.			
Jan. ,, . .	15	6	0
Feb. ,, . .	19	0	3
March ,, . .	31	6	0½
April ,, . .	20	4	0¼
May ,, . .	14	15	5
June ,, . .	7	4	4
July ,, . .	7	15	8
Sept. ,, . .	27	6	1
Oct. ,, . .	59	17	6
Paid to Sisters for the little Cripple	14	6	6
Paid to Sisters for the 'Don' and other trucks	8	10	6
Paid to Sisters for the Orphanage . . .	5	0	0
Balance in hand for the 'Donna'	451	2	1
Total . .	699	7	7¾

STATISTICAL TABLE.

	Men served	Basins of Soup	Basins of Stew	Slices of Pudding	Sausage Rolls	Cake	Sandwich	Dumplings
January	1600	372	390	1096	37			
February	3900	752	1286	1187	345			
March . .	6171	532	2934	1980	460			
April . .	4972	276	2901	1108	238			
May . .	2096	368	648	1392	6			
June . .	1300	473	534	776	—			
July . .	1238	200	688	728	—	271	32	
September[1]	6103	336	2502	2268	584	1189	597	382
October[1] .	13,779	456	5820	6048	820	743	681	

[1] At London Bridge.

Marrying and Giving in Marriage.

By Mrs. Molesworth,

Author of 'Hathercourt Rectory,' 'Carrots,' &c.

CHAPTER VI.

LEONORA was watching anxiously for her sister, when the latter went home. Lady Christina was busy in her own room, so the two girls were alone for a little.

'He came, Avé,' said Leo, eagerly. 'I was practising in the little drawing-room, and mamma wanted something fetched, so she called me in. I told him—just as you said.'

'Yes, dear,' said Aveline, wearily, sitting down by the side of the bed, and leaning her head on it.

'What's the matter, Avé dear? You look so white,' said the young girl, anxiously.

'Did you tell him where I had gone?'

'Yes, of course—he was rather *funny*, I thought. He only smiled when I asked him about going to see some other places, and said he wished we could. But he didn't fix anything, and he had to speak to mamma. Some other people came in.'

'He couldn't fix anything. He's going away,' said Aveline.

'Oh, Avé!' exclaimed Leo. 'Did you see him—did he tell you? Perhaps it's nonsense.'

'No, no. It's quite true. I saw him. He came to call at the Ayrtons'! Leo,' Aveline went on impressively, 'do you remember what I said that evening at home, when we were first talking of coming to Paris, that I almost wished Mr. Hereward were not to be here?'

'Yes,' said Leo, 'I remember.'

'Well,' said Aveline, 'I wish it more than ever—I mean I wish he hadn't been here. Oh, how I wish it!'

'But why?' asked the child. 'Perhaps he can't help going

away—perhaps he'll come back soon. You seem as unhappy as if——'

'As if what?'

'As if you thought he didn't care for you,' said Leo, softly, 'and I'm sure he does.'

Aveline's face relaxed.

'I don't know,' she said. 'I had begun to have a most horrible feeling that he *despised* me—no, not exactly that—he is too kind—but that he pitied me, that he thinks *I* care for *him*, and that he'd better go away. *Oh*, Leo!'

'But you caring for him—I mean his seeing you did—needn't prevent his caring for you,' said the little girl, simply. 'Don't work yourself up so about it, Avé. *I* think he's very good and kind and nice, too nice to have any feelings not *quite* nice to you. And he may *have* to go away.'

Aveline sat up, and began to take off her hat.

'I could bear anything if I was sure he didn't at all *despise* me—it's the only word,' she said. Then as her sister crept nearer her, 'Kiss me, Leo,' she said. 'Oh, when you are grown up I do *hope* I shall be able to keep you from being unhappy!'

The next few days passed in a feverish hope that she should see Mr. Hereward before he left, and that *something*—she knew not what—might be said by him to lessen the pain she was suffering. She scarcely dared go out, and yet it was impossible to stay at home without risking Lady Christina's suspicions that something was the matter. For every day brought invitations and proposals for all sorts of expeditions from the Ayrtons—more often for Aveline alone than for the rest of the Verney party. And on the whole, Aveline felt more at ease with gentle, caressing Lady Ayrton, than within reach of her mother's sharp eyes. Nor was Mr. Ayrton offensive to her. She grew accustomed to his rough, rather boorish manner, looking upon him as a somewhat unmannerly but honest dog, whom it was easy to keep in good humour by a pat or a smile, and concerning whom no further consideration was necessary. And she was too self-absorbed to notice how invariably he made one of their expeditions, nay, more, how often Lady Ayrton managed to leave her to his escort, and seemed to take it for granted that the two young people were the best of friends. For he would ramble on for half an hour at a time about the only subjects he was conversant with at all fit for a young lady's hearing, his horses and dogs, his hunting and shooting, without observing how heedless were Aveline's ears, how superficial her little ejaculations of interest and her well-bred smiles.

What she feared came to pass. One afternoon, when Lady Ayrton had 'dropped' her at their own door, and Aveline, fagged and anxious, came slowly into the drawing-room, her mother looked up.

'Such a pity you weren't in five minutes sooner, my love,' she said. 'Mr. Hereward has just gone—he waited to see you to say good-bye,—he is off to England on leave to-morrow, and hardly expects to return here. He may very probably be sent to Rome. I thanked him and all that, poor fellow—he has been most good-natured.'

'Yes,' was all Aveline could say. Something in her voice made her mother look up. The girl's face was very pale.

'What can be the matter with her?' thought Lady Christina. 'Surely that clumsy Wilfred hasn't spoilt everything by proposing to her all of a sudden? Sophia promised me there should be nothing premature.'

'Was Mr. Ayrton with you to-day?' she went on. 'You look very tired, my dear.'

'I am tired,' said Aveline. 'No, Mr. Ayrton didn't come. His mother *is* so kind. I am sorry to have missed Mr. Hereward,' she went on steadily.

'She is only tired,' thought Lady Christina, and she rang for tea—an extra indulgence, for she economised in some particulars by doing at Rome as the Romans do, and eschewing afternoon tea in Paris except on her reception days.

'Mamma,' said Aveline, grateful in two senses for the tea, 'to-morrow is the day you said I might spend with Modeste. I told Lady Ayrton I could not go out with her, but she asked me to go to the Français with them in the evening. She said there was some piece you would like me to see. Mamma, I should like to go to Modeste.'

Why the idea of Modeste seemed congenial to her she did not know—Modeste so happy, she so *very* miserable! Perhaps it was that Modeste knew 'him' and always spoke so nicely of him. Modeste, too, would ask no questions. 'She will be sorry for me without my needing to tell her why,' thought Aveline.

Lady Christina hesitated.

'Very well, my dear, I have no objection. Only, of course, you will be careful. Modeste's head will be full of her trousseau now that the marriage is so soon to be announced.' It would do Aveline no harm to think a little more of such things, she reflected.

'Thank you, mamma,' and Aveline rose to go.

'Wait a moment, my dear. It is very gratifying to me to see how fond Lady Ayrton is of you, Aveline. And Sir Francis, too, he was speaking so very nicely of you to me.'

'They are both very kind. I like them both.'

'And,' Lady Christina went on—'I think it right to allude to this to you, Aveline; you are no longer a child—and your father, too, thought I should tell you of it. It is not *only* Sir Francis and Lady Ayrton who are fond of you. I think—nay, I am sure—that Mr. Ayrton admires you even more than they do.'

Aveline looked at her mother with a little smile. Sad as she was, she could not help smiling at the solemnity with which Lady Christina made the announcement. What *did* it matter?

'Well, mamma, dear, and if he does,' she was beginning, but a sudden idea struck her. 'Oh, I see—you are afraid of—of the poor man getting any nonsense in his head, and that it might be uncomfortable, as they are such old friends. I will be very careful, but indeed I don't think I have done anything that you could blame me for.'

'Blame you—I have no thought of blaming you. I don't understand you, my dear.'

'I mean that I have neither sought nor encouraged his admiration,' said Aveline.

'But I should not blame you if—if, to a certain extent only, of course,' said Lady Christina, faltering a little, 'you had done so. You must know that such a marriage does not come in a girl's way every day.'

Aveline grew white with amazement and—something almost approaching horror.

'Mamma,' she said, 'you *can't* mean that you would like me to marry that—that—— And papa, you can't say *he* would like it.'

'Calm yourself, Aveline,' said her mother, retaining her own self-control by a great effort. It would ruin all for her to get angry. 'It is natural for you to feel startled at first. Of course, my dear, we should never wish you to do what *you* did not like. Your father only agreed with me that the thing should be alluded to, suggested to you. He would never—nor would I—lay weight on what *we* wish on such a subject.'

Poor Mr. Verney! All he had said or done was to express considerable incredulity when his wife hinted that Mr. Ayrton's evident admiration of Aveline did not seem displeasing to the girl, and to insist that his daughter should not be in any way

involved, blindfold as it were, in unconscious or unintended acceptance of the young man's attentions.

'Aveline is such a baby in some ways,' he said. 'I insist upon your warning her, Christina; or else I shall do it myself. I cannot believe she can like that loutish fellow. Just compare him with Hereward, for instance. If it had been he, now.'

'Nigel Hereward!' exclaimed Lady Christina. 'What are you thinking of, my dear Owen? He has nothing to marry on, and no prospects. Aveline is far too sensible to dream of such a thing.'

'I hope she is,' replied Mr. Verney, not sorry to believe it must be so. Such matters were Christina's business, not his, and he supposed she knew what she was about. And then, as was his habit, he dismissed the subject from his mind. But his words had not been without their effect.

Aveline grew quiet again.

'Thank you, mamma. I knew you would never force me to anything utterly distasteful to me,' she said. 'Still, I would so much rather you and papa should feel *with* me about everything.'

'We can but do our best, my dear, and putting old heads on young shoulders does not come within that, I fear,' said Lady Christina somewhat bitterly. 'I have tried to bring you up sensibly, Aveline, but still, I suppose, you cannot realise that life is not all sentiment. Hard, practical matters must be considered,' she added with a sigh.

Her face seemed fagged and careworn. Aveline, overstrung and weakened by all she had gone through, felt a rush of pity as she looked at it. It was all she could do to prevent herself bursting into tears.

'Poor mamma,' she said, stooping to kiss her as she went. In her own room the tears did come, fast and blindingly.

'Oh dear, oh dear,' she sobbed. 'Life is very, very difficult.'

She spent the next day at the rue de Touraine. All the three ladies there received her with open arms. But Madame de Boncœur lifted her hands in dismay when she first saw her.

'My child, my child!' she exclaimed, 'what have they been doing to you? You look so ill, so white, and I could almost fancy you had grown thinner since last Thursday. Be very good to her, Modeste,' as her granddaughter was taking Aveline off to her own quarters.

'You do look ill, dear Aveline,' Mademoiselle de Villers said sympathisingly, 'and last Thursday evening you looked so bright and beautiful.'

'I am not ill, thank you,' Aveline replied, 'but I have been troubled since I saw you. Indeed, I am so still.'

Modeste stroked the hand which she was holding in hers, and looked at Aveline hesitatingly.

'I can't think what it is,' she said. 'I—I thought, and so did Maurice, that all looked so bright for you. But if we were mistaken—your parents would never wish you to marry any one if you do not want.'

'No,' said Aveline, 'it isn't that.'

'I thought you *did* care for him,' said Modeste.

Aveline sighed.

'I can't explain,' she said. 'And mamma—I think it is best not to say anything—mamma would not like it.'

'Naturally,' said Modeste. 'These things are best never discussed except with our mothers. Forgive me, dear, if I was indiscreet. But do not make yourself so unhappy, Aveline. If something has not suited this time—well, it is often so. I was sorry myself when I felt I could not like some one grandmother liked. But how happy I am now. There are so many things to consider in marriage, you see. Of course, our parents have to consider a great deal besides what *we* think of,' added the practical little French girl.

'Yes,' said Aveline, 'that is just it. How far *are* those things to be considered? How far may we consider our part of it, as you call it?'

Modeste shook her head.

'I can't say, unless I knew all; and that, it would neither be right for you to tell, nor for me to listen to,' she said. 'Our parents are the only ones to consult.'

'Yes, I suppose so,' said Aveline, sighing. 'But things are so different. My parents have so much anxiety with their large family, and you know we are not rich, Modeste.'

Mademoiselle de Villers shook her head sagely.

'I know,' she said. 'And you must feel that you would do *anything* to please them.'

'I feel, at least, that it would be cruel to displease or disappoint them,' Aveline agreed. 'Now we have talked enough about *me* —tell me something about yourself, Modeste.'

'Yourself,' of course, by this time meant Maurice de Bois-Hubert, his tastes and opinions, his family and home, and the whole prospects and intentions of the young *fiançés*. The proposed trousseau, too, as Lady Christina had prophesied, came in for some

share of discussion. So the day passed, and Aveline felt, to some extent, soothed by Modeste's affection. Nigel's name was only once mentioned.

'Did you see Mr. Hereward before he went away? I suppose he called to say good-bye?' asked Aveline.

'Yes, he called the other day, but we were not at home,' Modeste replied. 'He has not gone away for long, has he?'

'I think he is not coming back any more,' said Aveline, and Modeste raised her eyebrows in surprise.

'But that is not certain, is it?' she said. 'I think my grandmother would have known. He is a great friend of hers.'

That 'not certain' sent Aveline home more cheered than by all the kindness her friends showered upon her.

'Grandmamma,' said Modeste, when they were alone that evening, 'I don't understand much about English people's ways as you do, but I don't think they arrange some things very well.'

'What do you know about it, my little girl?' said Madame de Boncœur, amused. 'What things?'

'I don't think Aveline should be so unhappy,' said Modeste, answering indirectly. 'Grandmamma, she says Monsieur Hereward has gone away for always.'

The old lady looked troubled.

'Indeed,' she said, 'I did not know that. I do not understand it, my child. But if it be that he is too poor, or some difficulty of that kind—for I am sure he cares for her—I shall indeed think that her mother has been much to blame. She,' she went on as if speaking to herself, 'who was indirectly accusing us—us French parents—of heartless disregard of our children's feelings.'

Aveline went to the Français that evening with Lady Ayrton and her son. The piece was a serious one, and as much above Mr. Ayrton's comprehension as it was contrary to his taste. After vainly endeavouring to stifle his yawns, he turned to Aveline in hopes of finding sympathy.

'I can't stand this, 'pon my soul—can you, Miss Verney?' he said, with an expression of suffering which almost made her laugh. 'My French does well enough when it's a play with any common sense, but I can't make head or tail of this—'pon my soul, I can't.'

'I'm very sorry for you, Mr. Ayrton,' said Aveline. 'I find it very interesting—and you must allow the acting is good.'

He looked rather discomfited.

'You're so con—you're so very good-natured, Miss Verney,' he

began, edging rather nearer to her. 'You wouldn't think it rude of me to cut this, would you? I'll be back in time to take you home. You'll make it right with my lady?'

'Very well,' said Aveline, glad to be left in peace, whereupon he left the box with a nod.

'Has Wilfred gone?' asked Lady Ayrton, suddenly awaking to the fact.

'He told me to say he would return to take us home. He found the piece very dull, I'm afraid,' said Miss Verney, with a smile.

Lady Ayrton sighed a little.

'Poor Wilfred,' she said. 'He is not at all intellectual, Aveline—not like Sir Francis.'

'Intellect is not everything, however, Lady Ayrton,' said Aveline, consolingly. 'He may be a good, kind son, and a great comfort to you without being intellectual.'

His mother smiled with pleasure, yet her conscience smote her a little as she replied, 'True, my dear—and I think, yes, I really think under good influence he might make a kind husband. It would be delightful for his father and me if he married as we wish.'

'Yes,' said Aveline, dreamily, hardly hearing what was said. Her mind was running on the words in which Modeste had suggested more comfort than she knew—'perhaps it is not certain.'

But the days passed, and no allusion was made to Mr. Hereward's possible return. And a vague, scarcely acknowledged hope that 'he might write' faded gradually away. Aveline saw but little of her father at that time, less than in England, but on Sunday, on their way to church, Mr. Verney, who was walking alone with her, startled her by a sudden observation.

'You are not looking well, Avé. And when we first came over you were full of life and spirits.'

'I am not ill, papa, thank you,' she replied. 'Perhaps there was some excitement when we first came—the change and the novelty and all—that made me seem livelier than usual. You know it is my nature to be quiet—like you, papa.'

He gave her one of his glances from under his rough eyebrows.

'Are you beginning to find out that life is not such an easy business, poor child?' he said, with a kind of abrupt tenderness. 'Ah well, I suppose it can't be helped,' and he sighed.

'Papa dear, what are you sighing for? Are you troubled about things?' said Aveline.

'Well, yes, my dear, I can't say that things are going smoothly just now. I'm afraid this Paris business has been a mistake. It is costing more than we expected, and the London house has not let. Then I am bothered about Chris, Avé. It is evident he'll never pass his examination straight from school. I must send him to a crammer's for a year, and it's a very expensive business. And next year there will be Arthur——'

'Yes,' said Aveline, 'it is hard. I wish I could do anything to help you, papa.'

'Try and get back your spirits, my dear. I don't like to see you looking pale and dull.'

They were at the church door by now—there was no time for more.

Coming out, they were joined by Lady Ayrton and her son. The former attached herself to Mr. Verney.

'I want you to use your influence to help me in a little scheme I have set my heart upon, dear Mr. Verney,' she began with her soft, caressing manner. 'Aveline is not looking well——'

'No,' said her father, 'that is true.'

'I want to take her off with us to Fontainebleau for a few days,' said Lady Ayrton, 'we are going there on Wednesday or Thursday. There are some people staying there whom we know, and if it keeps fine we could have some picnics and nice drives. Will you let Aveline come?'

'I have no objection, if the child would like it. I daresay it would do her good. But you must speak to Christina,' he replied. Some vague misgiving came over him as he caught sight of Mr. Ayrton's well-dressed, groom-like figure at Aveline's side in front of them.

'She'd never look at him, and Christina has warned her. And the mother's a good soul. What a pity the son is what he is! It would have been a safe future for her.'

Aveline had got to the stage of hope deferred, when it mattered very little to her where or with whom she was. She liked Lady Ayrton's gentleness, and she dreaded her mother's sharp eyes. So she made no objection, even faintly expressed some pleasure at the idea of going to Fontainebleau.

She stayed there a week and came home looking more like herself. The afternoon of her return she sought her mother in her own room, where Lady Christina had established her davenport and neatly arranged bills and papers as at home.

'Mamma,' she began, 'if you are not busy——'

'I am rather busy, my dear—when am I not? But if you want to speak to me, I can attend to you.'

A faint flutter of hope made itself felt in the maternal breast. Could Aveline have 'anything to tell'? She did not look elated or excited, certainly, as she stood there, her fingers idly playing with the tassel of her parasol, her blue eyes gazing half dreamily out of the open window, through which a little breeze, fluttering softly, waved the clustering hair on her forehead—a fair picture, with her quiet face and serious mouth, for a mother to gaze upon, though too subdued, too grave for her twenty years.

'She is so unlike other girls,' thought Lady Christina. 'One can never judge of her.'

And 'Well, Aveline?' she said aloud.

'I only wanted to tell you, mamma,' Aveline replied—'I thought it was right you should know. What you once hinted at—about the Ayrtons, about Mr. Ayrton—has come true. At Fontainebleau he asked me to marry him.'

Lady Christina gasped with anxiety.

'And—you—you replied?'

'I told him, of course, I did not care for him in the least,' said Aveline. 'But I told it him gently—as gently and kindly as I could. I felt sorry for him, mamma. I should not have expected I would, but I did. I think he did care, more than I thought him capable of, poor man, so I said it as kindly as I could. So I hope it will cause no uncomfortable feeling with his mother.'

She spoke with perfect composure, whereas as she went on speaking Lady Christina's suspense and excitement rose to almost boiling point.

'You told him you did not care for him? Do you mean—oh, no, you *can't* mean that you refused him, Aveline? You said you would try to learn to care for him—you held out some hope?'

'What hope could I hold out, mamma, if I did not care for him?' replied the girl, with a tone of calm reproach infinitely irritating to her mother.

Lady Christina moved away—scalding tears rose to her eyes—she felt choking.

'Oh, Aveline,' she said, 'you break my heart.'

'Mamma!' exclaimed her daughter.

'Yes, you do. To refuse such a marriage—such a home, such prospects as you would have, all for a piece of sentimental fancy. You allow that you were sorry for him, that you believe in his sincerity; you have said a dozen times that you thought him kind-

hearted and honest, only not clever; you are very fond of his father and mother; what would you have? There is something in your mind that you have not told me. Can it be, is it possible that you have been cherishing any groundless nonsense about—any one else? If so, the sooner you discard it the better. Tell me the truth, Aveline.'

'Mamma,' said Aveline, growing very pale, 'what do you mean?'

'You know what I mean,' replied Lady Christina, speaking more calmly; 'I mean Mr. Hereward. You must have known he was not what is called "a marrying man," that he is far too poor to marry.'

'I knew he was poor—at least not rich,' said Aveline. 'But papa was not rich when you married *him*, mamma. People do marry without being rich.'

'Yes, and live to repent it. I am not referring to my own case—it was not so rash at the time; for things might and should have turned out better. But Mr. Hereward is decidedly *poor*—completely and entirely out of the question, and with no prospects. And even more than that——'

'What, mamma?'

'If you were not such a very childish girl you would have seen he was not the sort of man for a girl to think of, except as a pleasant partner. He goes everywhere when he is in England, knows every one, and is a great favourite. He is not exactly a flirt, but everybody knows his attentions mean nothing, *cannot* mean anything. Why, only last week I heard of him as amusing himself tremendously somewhere or other. What girl or lady was it he was so devoted to?—I can't remember. I will look for the letter.'

'No,' said Aveline, 'you need not.'

'If I had had any *idea* you were so silly,' her mother went on, 'I would not have asked him here so much, or let you see him. But I thought you had more sense—you might never have lived out of a village, Aveline! I cannot bear to think of the young man having perhaps *seen* how silly you were. He will have thought you too absurd—he always talks so openly about his position—he would regret such a foolish misunderstanding of his ordinary friendliness to every pretty girl, more than any one! But I must say it is not what I expected of *my* daughter.'

'Mamma,' began Aveline, but her lips were dry and parched; it seemed as if her words could not pass them—'Mamma, you

have said enough. Neither Mr. Hereward nor any man shall have reason either to despise or pity me. I only ask you one thing—never let this subject be named again.'

'I am sure *I* have no wish ever to revert to it,' said Lady Christina. And then, even *she*, felt she had done and said enough for one morning.

A week later, Aveline returned from an afternoon spent with Lady Ayrton, and walked straight into the drawing-room where her mother was sitting alone.

'I want to tell you, mamma,' she said, 'that Mr. Ayrton has to-day repeated his offer to me—and I have accepted him.'

'My good child—my sweet Aveline,' exclaimed Lady Christina rapturously. But the cheeks which received the kisses she showered upon them were as cold as ice.

CHAPTER VII.

No rose—so at least says the proverb, and in so saying serves the purpose of a proverb's existence, to which strict veracity is not essential—no rose, we are told, is without its thorn—in other words, no joy without its drawback. And so Lady Christina found to her cost in the days which immediately succeeded Aveline's acceptance of Mr. Ayrton's suit. It was rather hard upon her, poor woman!—she was so ready, so anxious to rejoice, so brimming over with satisfaction and approval, so effusively delighted with her daughter—it surely was hard upon her that Aveline, the meek, the appealing, who hitherto had been exaggeratedly grateful for any crumb of maternal favour, should suddenly encase herself in a suit of invisible but most efficient armour, on whose smooth cold surface it was impossible to make any impression.

'She has always been a queer, tiresome girl,' said the mother to herself, when a few days' persistence in this attitude on Aveline's part had at last worn out her patience, to the extent at least of owning to herself the girl's 'tiresomeness.' 'I am sure, if it were not that we are so poor, and the future, with such a family, so uncertain, I would really have left Aveline to manage her own affairs and be an old maid if she chose. For as to marrying a man like Nigel Hereward, without a penny, so to speak, there is happily no chance of that—men have more sense nowadays, however silly girls are. And of course he never dreamt of anything

serious. But small thanks, truly, one gets in this world for doing one's duty, even from one's children!'

There was perhaps some slight consolation in fancying herself a martyr; and even had it been still slighter, it was all that Lady Christina was likely to get from any quarter. For to every one save her mother Aveline was more charming than she had ever been before, so that the poor lady had to listen with a smiling countenance to praises of her daughter which found but faint echo in her heart, though she would have died rather than allow this to be seen. Even with Aveline herself she never took off the mask or permitted her real vexation to appear. An underlying, undefined, though not indefinable instinct warned her that it was best so—she would avoid the thin ice without seeming to have the faintest suspicion of its existence—she would skate along cheerily with apparently perfect satisfaction that the chief person concerned could not be enjoying herself more. And in this she was wise; it was in fact the only position consistently open to her.

For even Mr. Verney seemed just now to have got on to the sunshiny side of the road with all the others in some incomprehensible and rather irritating way. Only Lady Christina was left out in the cold. *Noblesse oblige* however; she would bear it and grin, and nobody should suppose she had anything to bear. Even when, as happened more than once, she detected some little outward expression of affection or sympathy pass between the father and daughter, when Aveline slipped her hand inside Mr. Verney's arm, or he patted her soft fair head when he left them in the morning, Lady Christina tried to feel delighted.

'He might have taken it into his head to oppose it—it is really most fortunate that he is reasonable enough to see the advantages of it. But all the same he might give *some* little credit where credit is due.' This last with the fine inconsistency of the British matron, who, while secretly congratulating herself on the success of her wise diplomacy, is at the same moment ready—and, incredible as it may seem, ready in all honesty—to express her conviction that 'made marriages' are immoral, and that interference in such matters is terribly dangerous.

She had not been present at the little scene between her husband and child the very evening on which Aveline's engagement was announced, nor had she heard what passed.

'Let me tell papa myself, please,' had been Aveline's only request; and the girl had done so. Lady Christina made some excuse for leaving them alone in the dining-room after dinner, and Aveline then told her tale.

'Papa,' she said quietly, but without the freezing coldness of manner which had roused her mother's indignation, 'Papa, I have something to tell you. Mr. Ayrton asked me to-day to marry him, and I have accepted him. He is coming to see you to-morrow, and I think Sir Francis Ayrton will want you to go to see him, as he can't come here.'

Mr. Verney sat for a moment or two in absolute silence.

'Papa,' said Aveline again, with a kind of fear or apprehension in her voice.

Then he turned round and looked her full in the face.

'Avé,' he said, and the anxious look in his eyes made him seem almost haggard—'Avé, I don't understand. There has been some question of this before—has there not? Your mother told me something, vaguely, a few days ago. She said you couldn't make up your mind, and I took that to mean you didn't like the—Mr. Ayrton, but that you wanted to get out of it quietly, not to vex your mother. And so what does this mean now?'

Aveline stood before him, quietly still, but her eyes were bent on the ground. Then she raised them, and said with a slight smile

'I suppose, papa, it is that I have changed my mind.'

'But you don't *love* him; you can't care for him?' said Mr. Verney.

Aveline hesitated.

'I don't *dislike* him, papa. I like him ever, oh, ever so much better than I used to do, now that I have seen more of him. He is like a rough but kindly boy in many ways—and—it does help to make me like him that he should like me, that he should have chosen me for myself—for, as mamma says, I have no fortune, and that is what most people think of nowadays. And no doubt he might marry far better, if he liked.'

Mr. Verney groaned. It was strange to hear this worldly view of matters from Aveline's innocent lips, strange and sad, even though the way in which she expressed herself showed her own simplicity and unworldliness the more clearly. Full well did he know who had suggested it. Yet he felt that in honesty he could not deny that there was some truth in what she said. But another question hovered on his tongue.

'Assure me of one thing at least, my child;—you care for no one more?' he was on the point of saying, when he stopped short. His diplomatic training had taught him to beware of suggesting objections; too well he knew how a word of over-

caution, of misgiving, may call into positive existence, may give definite form and substance to vague and unrealised possibilities that would otherwise have faded into nothing ere they were born.

'If there is any one, it is Hereward,' he reflected, 'and if Hereward it be, all the better if she has not owned it to herself. For they *couldn't* marry—Christina is right enough there—he has no prospects whatever; and even if he cared for her, he is too honourable to show it, and then there would be heart-breakings, and Heaven knows what.'

So the words died on his lips. But Aveline stood waiting to hear what he was going to say.

'I don't like you to talk like that,' he said. 'My darling, do you think the man could find plenty of girls like *you* to marry him, be they penniless or not?'

Aveline for the first time changed colour a little, but it was with pleasure.

'I don't know,' she said; 'I suppose he could. But I like you to think me nicer than other girls, dear papa, of course. And,' she went on eagerly, as if glad to get to this part of the subject, 'there is one thing I *can* set your mind at rest about thoroughly, and that is about his—Mr. Ayrton's people. Whomever I married, papa, I could never like his father and mother better than, no, nor as much as I like Sir Francis and Lady Ayrton. They are so good and kind to me.'

'Yes,' replied her father, 'I believe they are to be relied upon.' Still he spoke moodily, and sat with his eyes staring before him. 'But Sir Francis Ayrton is in very bad health. He cannot live very long, and, if he were dead, you would be altogether at the mercy of that——' He broke off and sat silent again. 'Aveline,' he went on at last, 'are you determined upon this? Do you know what you're about? I have no actual right or reason to forbid it, for if I died Heaven only knows what would become of you all. But—do you know what you're about?'

'Yes,' said Aveline, steadily. 'I think I do.'

Then she kissed him and went away.

Mr. Verney remained sitting where she had left him.

'No use saying anything more at present,' he reflected. 'She's not going to be married to him to-morrow, nor the day after. The thing may not go through. If I found out anything actually bad about the fellow I'd have to stop it, and—I should not be sorry. Still, there is truth in what she says. And, practically speaking, no doubt it would be an immense relief to have one of

them thoroughly well provided for. She would be awfully good to the others, and she could afford to be so. But I hope, I earnestly hope, she hasn't thought too much of this. I trust Christina has not been working on the girl's unselfishness.' Then he got up and lit a cigar and sat down again. 'I must keep my eyes open,' he said to himself, 'though it isn't easy just now, when I hardly ever am at home.'

On the whole, however, his face looked a trifle less careworn than before the conversation with Aveline. But when, later in the evening, Lady Christina came softly into the room, and glancing at him felt encouraged to broach the great subject, she found 'Owen' less responsive than she had been led to hope by the calm expression of his face.

'Our dear girl—Aveline—has—she has been speaking to you?' she began, doubting a little, as she went on, if indeed Aveline had done so.

Mr. Verney slowly took his cigar from between his lips.

'Yes,' he said. 'But if you please, Christina, I don't want to talk about it. I'm not going to object or interfere, you needn't be afraid of that; but I'd rather not talk about it—not at present, any way.'

So thus, for the second time, Lady Christina's effusive satisfaction had to be repressed.

It might have been expected, nevertheless, that even failing response from the members of her own house, she was sure of completest sympathy in the success of their joint scheme on the part of her co-conspirator, her dear Sophia Ayrton. And Lady Ayrton was quite ready to give it, and in no stinted measure.

But—it was not somehow the sort of sympathy Christina wanted, and of this she was conscious even the very first morning, when Mr. Ayrton's mother hastened to her friend at an unearthly hour, and after rapturously kissing and hugging all of the family she came across, retired with her to discuss it together in private. True, Lady Ayrton kissed Lady Christina again with the tears in her mild eyes, assuring her she would henceforth love her better than ever; but, this tribute paid to her friend's personal claims, she launched off into such praise of Aveline, such reiteration of her sweetness, her affectionateness, her general incomparableness, that it grew rather wearisome. Far rather would Lady Christina have heard some interesting details as to practical matters, but all such considerations Sophia waived aside—'Francis will go into everything with your husband,' she said. 'It will be all perfectly

right. If only we—Wilfred, of course, first of all—can make that dear child of yours happy, I shall ask no more,' and again the tears showed signs of appearing. Lady Christina had to get out her handkerchief to hide her irritation.

'Why should she not be happy, my dear Sophia?' she said, after a moment's pause. 'She will have everything a girl can ask to make her so.'—'Sophia is really too sentimental for anything,' she said to herself.

'I do hope it—I do indeed. So sweet of you to say so!' said Lady Ayrton.

'She would be a very unreasonable and ungrateful girl if she were *not* happy,' added Lady Christina, with the slightest possible touch of testiness in her tone, which her friend dimly perceived, though without understanding its cause.

'She is a dear girl,' she replied vaguely; 'and you have brought her up splendidly, Christina.'

'I have done my best,' Lady Christina replied, slightly mollified. She had no objection to Aveline's being praised when her perfections were traced to their true source; at the same time it was irritating to perceive that the girl was showing herself at her best to the Ayrtons, exerting herself, in a manner not usual with her, to be bright and attractive, affectionate and responsive to these strangers, and to her mother—to the one who deserved it all—comporting herself with a cold indifference of manner almost resembling tacit reproach!

And, strange to say, Aveline's cheerfulness was in a sense sincere. Had she not felt, one might almost say, happy, it was not in her to have acted the part, and for some little time the fictitious house of content which she had erected for herself appeared to her a real and sufficiently agreeable dwelling-place. Many things combined to foster this illusion. Wilfred Ayrton was at his best. He was sincerely obliged to Aveline for having reconsidered her first decision, for he had gone through some days of sharp anxiety lest he should after all lose the promised bribe, feeling sure that on him alone would fall Sir Francis's displeasure should his suit be rejected. And as in him an almost incredible amount of self-conceit was united to more grossly sordid defects, he did not, strange to say, altogether disbelieve in the unworldliness of the girl's motives.

'You're a deal luckier than you deserve to be,' had been his father's somewhat uncomplimentary congratulation. 'Try to be

worthy of her liking and friendliness, if you can. You can't flatter yourself that she's in love with you; but—such things do turn out decently now and then, after all, though *I* take no responsibility in the matter, mind you.'

'I don't see why——' Wilfred began, but hesitated. Dread of his father's caustic tongue was perhaps the acutest intellectual sensation of which he was capable. 'You're not very flattering to your son, sir,' he added, with a clumsily self-conscious laugh.

Sir Francis looked at him with an expression, sardonic, satirical, and contemptuous, yet traversed by gleams of positively genial amusement quite impossible to describe.

'Upon my soul!' he ejaculated. But for Mr. Ayrton it was quite enough; he made no further attempt at self-assertion with his father.

And on second thoughts that gentleman was glad he had said no more.

'Better let him imagine she *is* in love with him than suggest any other motive, which he is incapable of appreciating,' he reflected. 'Poor little girl—she is in love with self-sacrifice, I fear. Thank God, it's the women—not I that have had to do with it. The audacity, the recklessness of women—even a soft fool like Sophia, "rushing in where angels fear to tread"—passes belief. But if it's to be, I'll do what I can for the child, provided only she cares for no one else;' and as this thought crossed his mind a certain recollection caused the invalid's thin resolute face to grow sad and stern. 'If that were so, I should indeed tremble for her.'

He was not a little surprised and puzzled, though on the other hand relieved, to see the young girl looking genuinely happy when she came to receive the good wishes of her future father-in-law.

'Upon my soul, my dear Miss Verney,' he said, 'I have never seen you so blooming. I may really congratulate you, then? You are not frightened out of your wits at the idea of becoming the daughter of an old bear like me?'

'It's the part of it——' began Aveline, but she checked herself suddenly; 'the part of it all *I* like the best,' she was going to have said. 'It is one thing that makes me really happy,' she began again, 'to think that you and dear Lady Ayrton are pleased. I don't think it can always be the case in such matters that, that——' and then she stopped, and smiled a little, and blushed a little.

'That a new daughter should meet with such a welcome,' said Sir Francis. 'My dear, if it were not so in this case we should indeed be hard to please. I could wish for no happier fortune for my son than to call you his wife; no greater blessing for myself during the few weary years that may still remain to me than to call you my daughter.'

'Thank you,' said Aveline, very gently. She was at all times impressionable, and at the present juncture in a far more high-strung condition than she had any conception of. The tears crept quietly into her eyes, and Sir Francis saw them, though he took care to look as if he did not.

'Surely,' thought Aveline, 'surely, if it makes so many people happy, I must be doing right. If only,' and here was the sore root of bitterness—'if only mamma had kept to telling me it would be a good thing for them all, and a comfort to her and papa, without saying those dreadful things. Why couldn't she understand—she once was a girl herself—*why* couldn't she understand that I could have given up all thoughts of *him* quite as thoroughly, and oh, so much less bitterly, if she had just let me know it couldn't be—but that, if things had been different, it *might* have been? Why did she make me feel so dreadfully, so miserably *ashamed?*'

But she pulled herself up suddenly when it dawned upon her that Sir Francis was speaking.

'I beg your pardon,' she said hastily; 'I am afraid I didn't hear what you were saying.'

'Never mind, my dear, you have plenty of other things to think of. I was only asking what your plans are. I must not take up too much of your time.'

'I have come to stay till the afternoon,' said Aveline. 'I am going out with Lady Ayrton and your son.'

'Speak of the ——, we'll suppress the rest,' said Mr. Ayrton's voice, and he burst into a noisy laugh at his own wit as he entered the room. But Aveline was not inclined to be hard upon him; she always felt a little sorry for the young man in his father's presence, and she saw that the noisiness was to cover some amount of nervousness, or whatever answered to that in Mr. Ayrton's organisation.

'There is a prettier version of that proverb,' she said gently, anxious to put father and son at their ease.

'There *is*,' said Sir Francis, with his thin cynical chuckle;

'but, sorry as I am not to adopt your suggestion, my dear Aveline, I confess I do *not* see its appropriateness in the present instance.' For the old trick of sneering at his son was too strong upon him. Aveline reddened a little and glanced at her future father-in-law with reproach in her eyes. Wilfred stared at them both in bewilderment.

'The joke's beyond me,' he said, with a kind of rough good nature.

'And it is certainly not worth explaining,' said Sir Francis, in a tone which Aveline felt was intended to express penitence.

'I've been speaking to Aveline about riding, sir,' he began. 'It's a shame she shouldn't have some just now—it's just the weather for it.'

'Are you fond of riding, my dear?' asked Sir Francis.

'Yes—I think so. But I have ridden very little,' said the girl.

There was not much enthusiasm in her tone—yet, a few weeks ago, how she and Nigel Hereward had longed for a canter in the Bois!

'Should I have to ride alone with *him?*' was the unspoken thought in her mind. But no sooner did she recognise it than she felt shocked at herself. 'I daresay I should like it very much,' she added bravely, 'if it could be managed.'

'Managed?—of course it can be,' said Wilfred. 'I'll telegraph to-day to Mackworth and see which of the horses he thinks would do best.'

'And who would go with you?' asked Lady Ayrton, who had followed her son into the room. 'I wish *my* riding days were not over, for your sake, dear Aveline,' she added plaintively.

'I don't know the horse that would carry you if they weren't,' said her son, coarsely; 'but, for that matter, why need we have any one? I flatter myself I can look after *one* young lady—I've managed three or four before now.'

'It would not do here,' said Lady Ayrton, quickly; 'if we were at home in the country it would be quite different, of course.'

'Bother!' said Wilfred, 'what's the sense of minding all these rubbishing French ideas? *We're* not French, thank goodness. But I say,' as a brilliant idea struck him, 'I know some ladies who'd join us in a jiffy. Those Miss Greenfliers—they ride every day. You remember them, my lady, at Pau—awfully jolly girls.'

Lady Ayrton put some constraint on herself to reply quietly.

'Do you mean those Americans? No, I don't think they would suit Aveline at all.'

'She isn't your wife *yet*,' said Sir Francis, in a low but stern voice to his son, and Aveline, who caught the words, gave an involuntary shiver. She had now been engaged a week to Mr. Ayrton, though it was the first time Sir Francis had been well enough to see his daughter-in-law elect, and this interview to which she had been looking forward with some kind of pleasure threatened to leave her in clouds of misgiving.

His father's tone acted as a cold shower-bath on Mr. Ayrton. In an ordinary state of matters the young man would have sullenly left the room. But the good-humour born of his present success and agreeable prospects—which he was not fool enough to desire to risk—came to the rescue.

'If that little sister of yours, now, could ride, she'd satisfy the proprieties, wouldn't she?' he said to Aveline.

'I suppose so,' said Miss Verney, smiling. Mr. Ayrton's good-nature had restored her cheerfulness for the moment. 'His father *is* too hard upon him, poor fellow,' she thought.

And Sir Francis, seeming to divine her feeling, hastened to repair his blunder.

'It would be just as easy to get two ladies' horses over as one,' he said amiably.

'We must ask your mother about it,' said Lady Ayrton. 'It would be a nice change for Leo to ride; don't you think she would enjoy it, Aveline?'

'I—I am not quite sure,' said Aveline, blushing a little, for in her heart she knew that her sister would like or enjoy no plan which included Mr. Ayrton's company. Leo was *the* one not to be won over; she had never been so miserable in her short life as since the announcement of Avé's engagement to 'that vulgar little groom,' and indeed for some time she had sturdily refused to believe in it.

'Rubbish,' said Mr. Ayrton, elegantly. 'She should be only too jolly pleased to get such a chance.'

'She would have an excellent opportunity of acquiring an accurate and graceful way of expressing herself in your company, my dear Wilfred. I trust, Aveline, you are *quite* sensible of the advantages of this kind held out to you,' said Sir Francis, gravely.

It was impossible not to laugh, but this time Wilfred's surface good-nature was not proof against his father's gibing. He muttered

something 'not loud but deep,' and for an instant Aveline shivered at the scowl which overspread his heavy features. Lady Ayrton interposed with nervous haste, and for her sake Miss Verney was glad to respond at once.

'Is mamma going to call for me?' she said. 'No, I am going to see Mademoiselle de Villers, if it would be convenient to you to drive me round that way instead of home.'

'Certainly, my love. Then, if you are ready, I think we had better go. Wilfred, just see if the carriage is ready. I think it is. I said in five minutes.'

'It is too bad of Francis to tease so; he often does when he is suffering more than usual,' she said to Aveline, as they were walking downstairs together.

'Yes,' the girl replied, 'I understand.'

She spoke so indifferently that Lady Ayrton hoped the little scene had made no impression on her. But inwardly the girl was quaking with apprehension. 'Does he often look like that?' she was asking herself; 'and does his mother know it?'

It was a pale and depressed-looking Aveline who entered Madame de Boncœur's salon to receive her friends' good wishes on her engagement, even though Mr. Ayrton had recovered his good-humour long before they reached the rue de Touraine, and had condescended to make some clumsy jokes on his *fiançée's* liking for 'chattering old Frenchwomen.'

(*To be continued.*)

At the Sign of the Ship.

THE Christmas number of the Psychical Society is probably the most satisfying, to an appetite for the marvellous, that has ever appeared. *Phantasms of the Living*,[1] by Mr. Gurney, Mr. F. W. H. Myers, and Mr. Podmore, contains a number of pages so great that arithmetic boggles at it, and offers about eight hundred 'cases,' authentic cases, of phantasms, with some little ones in, in an appendix. It is a most extraordinary and, to a contemplative mind, a most puzzling thing that one never can take Psychical Research seriously. The authors of those vast quartos are gentlemen of high attainments and literary accomplishments. They have given as much pains to organising an inquiry into abnormal occurrences as would fit out a theory of Home Rule, or of a cure for our social distresses. They have spared no labour, they have passed many hours in the most uninviting experiments with Thought Readers, they have interrogated the Aunts of the human species as to the phantasms they have beheld (it is extraordinary how great Aunts are in ghosts); and yet Psychical Research is not taken seriously. The topic is of the utmost gravity; it has puzzled men for uncounted ages: its solution would throw a kind of corpse-candle light on the problem of immortality. The very mythologist is interested in it, because such numbers of modern ghosts appear in a kind of halo of light, like Athene in the Odyssey; like Demeter in the Homeric hymn; like the miraculous serpents in Theocritus; like the 'barrow-fires' of old Scandinavian legend; like the fires which burn in Roslyn Chapel when a St. Clair is like to die; like the flame which attends the approach of spirits among the Eskimo. This uniformity of belief in such widely-separated peoples and ages must certainly have some law, either of hallucination, of mythical fancy, or of actual fact at the bottom of it. As a mythologist, I frankly acknowledge that those tales of phantasms are interesting; as a superstitious person I tremble (though I don't believe); and yet I cannot take Psychical Research seriously. The rest of the world seems just as flippant, and there must be some reason for the flippancy.

* * *

[1] London: Trubner. 2 vols.

Why does Psychical Research seem a vain thing? Why does it appear to lead to nothing? It is never safe to 'bar' any investigation, and to call it unscientific. Socrates barred natural philosophy: at present it is the only philosophy in fashion. One would not maintain that Psychical Research will never discover anything at all; but most persons feel that it will never persuade them, nor people like them, of the truth of its discoveries. Starting from all these experiments in the influence of mind on mind, 'telepathy,' and the rest, we see that only individual experience, in each case, will satisfy an observer; and even he will not be as satisfied as if the experiment were in the natural sciences. A young lady may take a young gentleman's hand, and write down on a slate what he is thinking of, without having to 'offer a penny for his thoughts,' like 'a fair capitalist' in the case of Mr. Harry Foker. This may prove to the Researchers present (who know the lady and gentleman) that mind can influence mind, without the use of the ordinary means of communication through the senses. It may be a plausible corollary that phantasms of the living are only an extension of the same business on a larger scale, and with suitable properties. But, long before he reaches that stage, the inquirer has become sceptical about the young lady who did not need to offer a penny for the young gentleman's thoughts. Indeed, if I am not to be allowed to believe in ghosts unless I first swallow Thought Reading, why, with a pang, but resolutely, I give ghosts up. If Thought Reading be the minor mysteries and ghosts the major mysteries in the new Eleusinia, then I shall never be initiated; but, to vary the illustration, will be 'ploughed' in spiritual 'Smalls.' The whole Thought Reading business is so dull, so precarious, so liable to charges of collusion and understanding between the parties to the game, that it seems a hopeless foundation for a new psychical philosophy. I am quite ready to admit that I do not see how the trick, if trick there be, is played. But it does not follow that there is no trick; probably, if trick there be, the players themselves scarcely know how they do it.

* * *

If one is permitted to skip all the early forms of telepathy, and get on in a hurry, like Demetrius Poliorcetes at Athens, to the greater mysteries, to the genuine phantasms, *they* are much more interesting. Here, in Mr. Gurney and Mr. Myers's book, we have about seven hundred cases, generally authenticated by the names of all concerned, of people who believe themselves to

have seen other people where they were *not*. The appearance so commonly coincides either with the death of the person thought to be seen, or with some unusual event in his life, that I do not see how the events can be dismissed as mere 'coincidences.' To make that plausible, it would be necessary to produce a fair proportion of similar 'hallucinations'—let us call them—when nothing particular was occurring at all. Till that sort of proof is produced, and as well authenticated as the original phantasms, we may dismiss the hypothesis of pure accident as a working hypothesis. There remain the theory of hoaxing, and the theory that there are odd accidents and an unexplored, perhaps unexplorable, region of human experience. Making large discounts for hoaxes, for mistaken identity, and for human folly, I confess I think there is still 'something in it.' Men and women *are* occasionally affected as if by the actual presence of people known to them, when those people are not only not present, but dying, perhaps, elsewhere.

* * *

I venture to offer an example from among my savage friends, as I think it is not noticed by Messrs. Myers and Gurney. The passage is from *Kamilaroi and Kurnai*, an account of the Australian tribes, by the well-known anthropologists, Messrs. Fison and Howitt (p. 267). 'Mr. C. J. Du Vè, a gentleman of much experience with the aborigines, tells me that in the year 1860, a Maneroo black fellow died while living with him. The day before he died, having been ill some time, he said that, in the night, his father, his father's friend, and a female spirit he could not recognise, had come to him, and said that he would die next day, and they would wait for him. Mr. Du Vè adds that, although previously the Christian belief had been explained to this man, it had at that time entirely faded, and that he had gone back to the belief of his childhood.' Mr. Fison adds, 'I could give many similar instances, which have come to my own knowledge among the Fijians, and, strange to say, the dying man in all those cases kept his appointment with the ghosts to the very day.'

This story, of course, takes hold of Psychical Research by another handle. These *Mrarts* of the Australian were phantasms of the dead, exactly like the vision the lady beheld of her dead mother, in a famous tale reported by Henry More. But Psychical Research has not got on yet to phantasms of the dead, genuine ghosts. When it does I am sure it will explain the odd pranks played, after death, by people who were quite sober when alive,

as a result of multiple personalities. Recent articles on Hypnotism, and on the case of Louis V——, bring out the fact that many of us are Jekylls, each with a tribe of Hydes. Now the mischievous ghost of a decent man is obviously only one of his Hydes, detached and on the loose. *Granting the facts*, this is a highly satisfactory explanation, and removes the reproach from the original lady or gentleman now represented, or shamefully misrepresented, by tricksy apparitions, in old country houses. Suppose Louis V——, the multiplex Frenchman, dies, his death will set free four or five personalities, of which only the least respectable will prefer to loaf about in our material world. This theory is not new: it comes in Plato, in the *Phædo*; but then Plato knew nothing of Louis V—— and multiplex personality. That new scientific theory seems to me rather like the early views about possession; and Louis V—— might say, 'My name is Legion.'

Perhaps there may be some sweet enthusiasts for Psychical Research who never heard of Louis V——. He was born at Paris, in 1803; and, like the chiefs of many tribes, he counts kindred only on the mother's side. He has fits, and, after a fit, he sometimes is quite good and virtuous, and an agricultural labourer; and, on other occasions, is violent, vicious, and by profession a tailor. *He has been in the Marines*; but it is not stated whether he told his experiences to that proverbially confiding body of men. If 'a past and forgotten mental state is suggested to him as his actual and present condition, he accepts the belief, and with it comes back his past physical condition.' He is a very remarkable and multiplex personality; but I cannot help congratulating the French Marines on having got rid of Louis V——.

* * *

A supernatural idea, on a gigantic and even Cosmic scale, is introduced by Mr. Walter Pollock in an ingenious and amusing sketch called 'Dreams,' published in the Christmas number of the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*. Mr. Pollock's idea is that some one, in a dream, invented a way of communicating with the people of Mars by means of signals reflected on to the disk of the moon. The Mars people signalled back, 'Do stop your confounded nightmares; the place is no longer fit to live in.' It appears, in fact, that the life of the natives of Mars is merely an acting out of our dreams, while *our* little lives are the practical fulfilment of the dreams of the natives of Mars. If this view be correct, it is high time that the natives of Mars took to a quieter class of nocturnal diversions; for this earth is 'no longer fit to

live in,' for a quiet man. Whether our lives would lose any of their zest—whether we would take them less seriously, if it could actually be proved that they are only the nightmares of men and women in another planet, is an interesting question in hypothetical metaphysics. Life is a dream: 'Shadows we are, and shadows we pursue.' I cannot say, for one, that things would be very much altered if the 'dream' turned out not to be our own dream, but the drowsy hallucination of some being in another planet.

* * *

How was the communication transferred to the pale face of the moon? Mr. Pollock does not tell us how it was done. But I have read in some strange old 'volume of forgotten lore' that Pythagoras had a plan which would have done what was necessary. He said that whatever is written in bean juice on this earth reappears on the lunar disk. How long it must be since any one tried this simple experiment, and wrote a sentence in bean juice! But who is the authority for the opinion of Pythagoras? I fear it is no more contemporary author than the late Lord Lytton in *The Caxtons*, a book rich in out-of-the-way information. I can find nothing about this effect of bean juice in Plutarch's essay on 'The Face in the Moon.' The ancient folk-lore of Beans is a most attractive topic to the antiquarian, because it seems wholly out of the question that we should ever understand what it was all about. Why would not Pythagoras let his pupils eat beans? Why had the Athenians a hero called Bean, or Bean-man? Why was it impious to attribute to Demeter, patroness of all other fruits, the discovery of the bean? Why might not beans be tasted by the initiated at the Eleusinian mysteries? Finally, why did the Shawnee prophet, in this our century, send round strings of beans which, mystically, were his body, so that when the faithful touched the beans they were supposed to 'shake hands with the prophet'? Here are puzzles for any of the newspapers which think puzzle-setting a dignified mode of attracting the public. A copy of this number of LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE will be presented[1] to any reader who can answer the questions about beans asked above in a manner satisfactory to a majority of the Folklore Society. Persons who attempt this puzzle will kindly assign to its author the line—

Ἴσον τοι κυάμους τε φαγεῖν κεφαλάς τε τοκήων.

'It is all one, whether you eat beans or the heads of your parents.'

[1] By Mr. Andrew Lang.—ED.

That beans, if hidden under manure, became human beings, is an assertion which Heraclides appears to attribute to Orpheus. This theory, of course, can be brought to the test of practical experiment. And why were beans thrown on tombs 'for the salvation of men'? Why was not the Flamen Dialis, at Rome, permitted even so much as to name beans? Who can unriddle all this? It is clear, as Lobeck admits, that there is plenty of religion in beans.

* * *

In a little book called *Wellerisms*, the question has been started, What is the origin of those facetious remarks of Sam's which always include the expression, 'as'—some one or other—'said'? '"Plenty to get and little to do," as the soldier said,' when he was sentenced to be flogged. As the judge remarked, 'What the soldier said is not evidence.' But it is interesting to observe that these facetious *formulæ* are common on the Continent as well as in England, and make part of the traditional wisdom of the people. In French they are called *Les comme dits*. In Germany M. E. Holfer has published a collection of them (*Wie das Volk spricht*. Stuttgard, 1876. 8th edition). Here are some French examples:—'Vive la lumière, comme dit l'aveugle.' This answers to '"I see, I see," said the blind man.' '"You're a liar," said the dumby'—a refined piece of Scotch popular humour. Here is one from George Sand:—'Je vais me résumer, comme dit M. le curé de Cuzion au commencement de tous ses sermons.' These are Dutch examples:—'"I know what I think," as the madman said to his keeper.' '"Nobody to blame," as the man said when he threw his wife downstairs.' '"Excuse me if there is any error," as the soldier said when he shot his colonel.' Samuel Weller's *comme dits* are better than these frivolous foreign endeavours.

* * *

Mr. Ignatius Donnelly takes a long time about publishing the celebrated Shakespeare cypher which is to prove, by aid of the First Folio, that the plays were written by Lord Bacon. Meanwhile a pleasant little discovery of contemporary allusions to *le vieux Williams*, as Théophile called the Swan of Avon, has been made by the Rev. W. D. Macray. Elizabethan specialists knew *The Return from Parnassus*—a Cambridge comedy, published in 1606, and reprinted in 1879 by Professor Arber. They knew it; I confess I did not, for rubbish is not necessarily attractive be-

cause it is Elizabethan. However, *The Return from Parnassus* was interesting to Elizabethan scholars, as *Zélinde*, or *Elomire Hypochondre*, is interesting to 'Moliéristes'—of whom I am the least, and not worthy to be called a Moliériste. Now, this *Return* was known to be the third play of a more or less comic trilogy; but where were the first and second parts? Mr. Macray has found them in old Tom Hearne's MSS. in the Bodleian, and has published them, very nicely, at the Clarendon Press. There are passages about Shakespeare in the first part of *The Return* now printed. The praises of our poet are put in the mouth of one Gullio, a dolt and braggart. He quotes *Venus and Adonis* and *Romeo and Juliet*; while Ingenioso mockingly cries, 'Sweet Mr. Shakespeare!' 'Oh sweet Mr. Shakespeare,' Gullio replies, 'I'll have his picture in my study at the Courte . . . A Countess and two lordes expect me to-day to dinner.' So swaggers Gullio, a snob in grain, though a clever American writer maintains that snobs were not evolved till after the French Revolution. I own I like Gullio, he is such an artless pedant; he spoke like a literary leading article. He quoted Homer all wrong, and Ronsard. But Gullio was in the right of it. 'Let this duncified worlde esteeme Spenser and Chaucer, I'll worship sweet Mr. Shakespeare.' Even in Shakespeare's day there were 'Trinity sniffers' at a famous seat of learning, and they sniffed at Shakespeare by putting his praises in the mouth of Gullio. Where are ye now, ye Sniffers?

A. LANG.

The 'Donna.'

THE EDITOR begs to acknowledge the receipt of the following subscriptions:—F. L. G. 5*l.* A Lieutenant R.N., 5*s.* W. S. Jones, 12*s.* 6*d.* E. D. G., 2*s.* 6*d.* M. H. F. Donne, 1*l.* A. Donne, 1*l.* L. C., 10*s.* C. H. G. B., 10*s.* Henry Dashwood, 1*l.* D. J. R., 10*s.* 6*d.* In Mem. S. G. T., 5*l.*

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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

FEBRUARY 1887.

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February 1887.

Allan Quatermain:

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF HIS

FURTHER ADVENTURES AND DISCOVERIES IN COMPANY WITH SIR HENRY CURTIS, BART., COMMANDER JOHN GOOD, R.N., AND ONE UMSLOPOGAAS.

By H. Rider Haggard, Author of 'She,' 'King Solomon's Mines,' &c.

Ex Africa semper aliquid novi.

CHAPTER IV.

ALPHONSE AND HIS ANNETTE.

AFTER dinner we thoroughly inspected all the outbuildings and grounds of the station, which I consider the most successful as well as the most beautiful place of the sort that I have seen in Africa. We then returned to the verandah, where we found Umslopogaas taking advantage of this favourable opportunity to thoroughly clean all the rifles. This was the only *work* that he ever did or was asked to do, for as a Zulu chief it was beneath his dignity to work with his hands; but such as it was he did it very well. It was a curious sight to see the great Zulu sitting there upon the floor, his battle-axe resting against the wall behind him, whilst his long aristocratic-looking hands were busily employed, delicately and with the utmost care, cleaning the mechanism of the breechloaders. He had a name for each gun. One—a double four-bore belonging to Sir Henry—was the Thunderer; another, my 500 Express, which had a peculiarly sharp report, was 'the

little one who spoke like a whip;' the Winchester repeaters were 'the women, who talked so fast that you could not tell one word from another;' the six Martinis were 'the common people;' and so on with them all. It was very curious to hear him addressing each gun as he cleaned it, as though it were an individual, and in a vein of the quaintest humour. He did the same with his battle-axe, which he seemed to look upon as an intimate friend, and to which he would at times talk by the hour, going over all his old adventures with it—and dreadful enough some of them were. By a piece of grim humour, he had named this axe 'Inkosi-kaas,' which is the Zulu word for chieftainess. For a long while I could not make out why he gave it such a name, and at last I asked him, when he informed me that the axe was evidently feminine, because of her womanly habit of prying very deep into things, and that she was clearly a chieftainess because all men fell down before her, struck dumb at the sight of her beauty and power. In the same way he would consult 'Inkosi-kaas' if in any dilemma; and when I asked him why he did so, he informed me it was because she must needs be wise, having 'looked into so many people's brains.'

I took up the axe and closely examined this formidable weapon. It was, as I have said, of the nature of a pole-axe. The haft, made out of an enormous rhinoceros horn, was three feet three inches long, about an inch and a quarter thick, and with a knob at the end as large as a Maltese orange, left there to prevent the hand from slipping. This horn haft, though so massive, was as flexible as cane, and practically unbreakable; but, to make assurance doubly sure, it was whipped round at intervals of a few inches with copper wire—all the parts where the hands grip being thus treated. Just above where the haft entered the head were scored a number of little nicks, each nick representing a man killed in battle with the weapon. The axe itself was made of the most beautiful steel, and apparently of European manufacture, though Umslopogaas did not know where it came from, having taken it from the hand of a chief he had killed in battle many years before. It was not very heavy, the head weighing two and a half pounds, as nearly as I could judge. The cutting part was slightly concave in shape—not convex, as is generally the case with savage battle-axes—and sharp as a razor, measuring five and three-quarter inches across the widest part. From the back of the axe sprang a stout spike four inches long, for the last two of which it was hollow, and shaped like a leather punch, with an opening for anything forced into the hollow at the punch end to be

pushed out above—in fact, in this respect it exactly resembled a butcher's pole-axe. It was with this punch end, as we afterwards discovered, that Umslopogaas usually struck when fighting, driving a neat round hole in his adversary's skull, and only using the broad cutting edge for a circular sweep, or sometimes in a *mêlée.* I think he considered the punch a neater and more sportsmanlike tool, and it was from his habit of pecking at his enemy with it that he got his name of 'Woodpecker.' Certainly in his hands it was a terribly efficient one.

Such was Umslopogaas' axe, Inkosi-kaas, the most remarkable and fatal hand-to-hand weapon that I ever saw, and one which he cherished as much as his own life. It scarcely ever left his hand except when he was eating, and then he always sat with it under his leg.

Just as I returned his axe to Umslopogaas Miss Flossie came up and took me off to see her collection of flowers, African liliums, and blooming shrubs, some of which are very beautiful, many of the varieties being quite unknown to me and also, I believe, to botanical science. I asked her if she had ever seen or heard of the 'Goya' lily, which central African explorers have told me they have occasionally met with and whose wonderful loveliness has filled them with astonishment. This lily, which the natives say blooms only once in ten years, flourishes in the most arid soil. Compared to the size of the bloom, the bulb is small, generally weighing about four pounds. As for the flower itself (which I afterwards first saw under circumstances likely to impress its appearance fixedly in my mind), I know not how to describe its beauty and splendour, or the indescribable sweetness of its perfume. The flower—for it only has one bloom—rises from the crown of the bulb on a thick fleshy and flat-sided stem, and the specimen that I saw measured fourteen inches in diameter, and is somewhat trumpet-shaped like the bloom of an ordinary 'longiflorum' set vertically. First there is the green sheath, which in its early stage is not unlike that of a water-lily, but which as the bloom opens splits into four portions and curls back gracefully towards the stem. Then comes the bloom itself, a single dazzling arch of white enclosing another cup of richest velvety crimson, from the heart of which rises a golden-coloured stamen. I have never seen anything to equal this bloom in beauty or fragrance, and as I believe it is but little known, I take the liberty to describe it at length. Looking at it for the first time I well remember that I realised how even in a flower

there dwells something of the majesty of its Maker. To my great delight Miss Flossie told me that she knew the flower well and had tried to grow it in her garden but without success, adding, however, that as it should be in bloom at this time of year she thought that she could procure me a specimen.

After that I fell to asking her if she was not lonely up here among all these savage people and without any companions of her own age.

'Lonely?' she said. 'Oh, indeed no! I am as happy as the day is long, and besides I have my own companions. Why, I should hate to be buried in a crowd of white girls all just like myself so that nobody could tell the difference! Here,' she said, giving her head a little toss, 'I am *I*; and every native for miles round knows the "Waterlily,"—for that is what they call me—and is ready to do what I want, but in the books that I have read about little girls in England it is not like that. Everybody thinks them a trouble, and they have to do what their schoolmistress likes. Oh! it would break my heart to be put in a cage like that and not to be free—free as the air.'

'Would you not like to learn?' I asked.

'So I do learn. Father teaches me Latin and French and Arithmetic.

'And are you never afraid among all these wild men?'

'Afraid? Oh no! they never interfere with me. I think they believe that I am "Ngai" (of the Divinity) because I am so white and have fair hair. And look here,' and diving her little hand into the bodice of her dress she produced a double-barrelled nickel-plated Derringer, 'I always carry that loaded, and if anybody tried to touch me I should shoot him. Once I shot a leopard that jumped upon my donkey as I was riding along. It frightened me very much, but I shot it in the ear and it fell dead, and I have its skin upon my bed. Look there!' she went on in an altered voice, touching me on the arm and pointing to some far-away object, 'I said just now that I had companions; there is one of them.'

I looked, and for the first time there burst upon my sight the glory of Mount Kenia. Hitherto the mountain had always been hidden in mist, but now its radiant beauty was unveiled for many thousand feet, although the base was still wrapped in vapour so that the lofty peak or pillar, towering nearly twenty thousand feet into the sky, appeared to be a fairy vision, hanging between earth and heaven, and based upon the clouds. The solemn majesty and

beauty of this white peak are altogether beyond the power of my poor pen to describe. There it rose straight and sheer—a glittering white glory, its crest piercing the very blue of heaven. As I gazed at it there with that little girl I felt my whole heart lifted up with an indescribable emotion, and for a moment great and wonderful thoughts seemed to break upon my mind, even as the arrows of the setting sun were breaking on Kenia's snows. Mr. Mackenzie's natives call the mountain the 'Finger of God,' and to me it did seem eloquent of immortal peace and of the pure high calm that surely lies above this fevered world. Somewhere I had heard a line of poetry,

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever,

and now it came into my mind, and for the first time I thoroughly understood what the poet meant. Base, indeed, would be the man who could look upon that mighty snow-wreathed pile—that white old tombstone of the years, and not feel his own utter insignificance, and by whatsoever name he calls Him, worship God in his heart. Such sights are like visions of the spirit; they throw wide the windows of the chamber of our small selfishness and let in a breath of that air that rushes round the rolling spheres, and for a while illumine our darkness with a far-off gleam of the white light which beats upon the Throne.

Yes, such things of beauty are indeed a joy for ever, and I can well understand what little Flossie meant when she talked of Kenia as her companion. As Umslopogaas, savage old Zulu as he was, said when I pointed out to him the peak hanging in the glittering air: 'A man might look thereon for a thousand years and yet be hungry to see.' But he gave rather another colour to his poetical idea when he added in a sort of chant, and with a touch of that weird imagination for which the man was remarkable, that when he was dead he should like his spirit to sit upon that snow-clad peak for ever, and to rush down the steep white sides in the breath of the whirlwind, or on the flash of the lightning, and 'slay, and slay, and slay.'

'Slay what, you old bloodhound?' I asked.

This rather puzzled him, but at length he answered—

'The other shadows.'

'So thou wouldst continue thy murdering even after death?' I said.

'I murder not,' he answered hotly; 'I kill in fair fight. Man is born to kill. He who kills not when his blood is hot is a

woman, and no man. The people who kill not are slaves. I say I kill in fair fight; and when I am "in the shadow," as you white men say, I hope to go on killing in fair fight. May my shadow be accursed and chilled to the bone for ever if it should fall to murdering like a bushman with his poisoned arrows!' And he stalked away with much dignity, and left me laughing.

Just then the spies whom our host had sent out in the morning to find out if there were any traces of our Masai friends about, returned, and reported that the country had been scoured for fifteen miles round without a single Elmoran being seen, and that they believed that those gentry had given up the pursuit and returned whence they came. Mr. Mackenzie gave a sigh of relief when he heard this, and so indeed did we, for we had had quite enough of the Masai to last us for some time. Indeed, the general opinion was that, finding we had reached the mission station in safety, they had, knowing its strength, given up the pursuit of us as a bad job. How ill-judged that view was the sequel will show.

After the spies had gone, and Mrs. Mackenzie and Flossie had retired for the night, Alphonse, the little Frenchman, came out, and Sir Henry, who is a very good French scholar, got him to tell us how he came to visit Central Africa, which he did in a most extraordinary lingo, which for the most part I shall not attempt to reproduce.

'My grandfather,' he began, 'was a soldier of the Guard, and served under Napoleon. He was in the retreat from Moscow, and lived for ten days on his own leggings and a pair he stole from a comrade. He used to get drunk—he died drunk, and I remember playing at drums on his coffin. My father——'

Here we suggested that he might skip his ancestry and come to the point.

'Bien, messieurs!' replied this comical little man, with a polite bow. 'I did only wish to demonstrate that the military principle is not hereditary. My grandfather was a splendid man, six feet two high, broad in proportion, a swallower of fire and gaiters. Also he was remarkable for his moustache. To me there remains the moustache and—nothing more.

'I am, messieurs, a cook, and I was born at Marseilles. In that dear town I spent my happy youth. For years and years I washed the dishes at the Hôtel Continental. Ah, those were golden days!' and he sighed. 'I am a Frenchman. Need I say, messieurs, that I admire beauty? Nay, I adore the fair.

Messieurs, we admire all the roses in a garden but we pluck one. *I* plucked one, and alas, messieurs, it pricked my finger. She was a chambermaid, her name Annette, her figure ravishing, her face an angel's, her heart—alas, messieurs, that I should have to own it!—black and slippery as a patent leather boot. I loved her; she was "so spirituous and abandoned"[1] that I could not choose but love her. I loved to desperation, I adored her to despair. She transported me—in every sense; she inspired me. Never have I cooked as I cooked (for I had been promoted at the hotel) when Annette, my adored Annette, smiled on me. Never'—and here his manly voice broke into a sob—'never shall I cook so well again.' Here he melted into tears.

'Come, cheer up!' said Sir Henry in French, smacking him smartly on the back. 'There's no knowing what may happen, you know. To judge from your dinner to-day, I should say you were in a fair way to recovery.'

Alphonse stopped weeping, and commenced to rub his back. 'Monsieur,' he said, 'doubtless means to console, but his hand is heavy. To continue: we loved, and were happy in each other's love. The birds in their little nest could not be happier than Alphonse and his Annette. Then came the blow—sapristi!—when I think of it. Messieurs will forgive if I wipe away a tear. Mine was an evil number; I was drawn for the conscription. Fortune would be avenged on me for having won the heart of Annette.

'The evil moment came; I had to go. I tried to run away, but I was caught by brutal soldiers, and they banged me with the butt-end of muskets till my mustachios curled with pain. I had a cousin a linendraper, well to do but very ugly. He had drawn a good number, and sympathised when they thumped me. "To thee, my cousin," I said, "to thee, in whose veins flows the blue blood of our heroic grandparent, to thee I consign Annette. Watch over her whilst I hunt for glory on the bloody field."

'"Make your mind easy," said he; "I will." As the sequel shows, he did!

'I went. I lived in barracks on black soup. I am a refined man and a poet by nature, and I suffered tortures from the coarse horror of my surroundings. There was a drill sergeant, and he had a cane. Ah, that cane, how it curled! Alas, never can I forget it.

'One morning came the news; my battalion was ordered to

[1] Here I have lapsed into Alphonse's original version. Sir Henry suggests that he was trying to translate 'si spirituelle et abandonnée.'

Tonquin. The drill sergeant and the other coarse monsters rejoiced. I—I made enquiries about Tonquin. They were not satisfactory. In Tonquin are savage Chinese who rip you open. My artistic tastes—for I am also an artist—recoiled from the idea of being ripped open. The great man makes up his mind quickly. I made up my mind. I determined not to be ripped open. I deserted.

'I reached Marseilles disguised as an old man. I went to the house of my cousin—he in whom runs my grandfather's heroic blood—and there sat Annette. It was the season of cherries. They took a double stalk. At each end was a cherry. My cousin put one into his mouth, Annette put the other in hers. Then they drew the stalks in till their lips met—and alas, alas that I should have to say it!—they kissed. The game was a pretty one, but it filled me with fury. The heroic blood of my grandfather boiled up in me. I rushed into the kitchen. I struck my cousin with the old man's crutch. How could I tell that his head was like an eggshell? But his skull was thin. The crutch went through it. He died. Annette screamed. The gendarmes came. I fled. I reached the harbour. I hid aboard a vessel. The vessel put to sea. The captain found me and beat me. He took an opportunity. He posted a letter from a foreign port to the police. He did not put me ashore because I cooked so well. I cooked for him all the way to Zanzibar. When I asked for payment he kicked me. The blood of my heroic grandfather boiled within me, and I shook my fist in his face and vowed to have my revenge. He kicked me again. At Zanzibar there was a telegram. I cursed the man who invented telegraphs. Now I curse him again. I was to be arrested for desertion, for murder, and returned to the guillotine. I escaped from the prison. I fled, I starved. I met the men of Monsieur le Curé. They brought me here. I am here full of woe. But I return not to France. Better to risk my life in these horrible places than to know the knife of the guillotine.'

He paused, and we nearly choked with laughter, having to turn our faces away.

'Ah! you weep, messieurs,' he said. 'No wonder—it is a sad story.'

'Perhaps,' said Sir Henry, 'the heroic blood of your grandparent will triumph after all; perhaps you will still be great.'

'Great!' replied the little Frenchman sadly. 'I am already great. I embody the genius of France. Yes, I—I with my

straw hat and my little cane, I am "la France." But will my greatness be recognised? That is the question!'

'We shall see,' said Sir Henry. 'And now I vote we go to bed. I am dead tired, and we had not much sleep on that confounded rock last night.'

And so we did, and very strange the tidy rooms and clean white sheets seemed to us after our recent experiences.

CHAPTER V.

UMSLOPOGAAS MAKES A PROMISE.

NEXT morning at breakfast I missed Flossie and asked where she was.

'Well,' said her mother, 'when I got up this morning I found a note put outside my door in which—— Well, here it is, you can read it for yourself,' and she gave me the slip of paper on which the following was written:

'DEAREST M——,—It is just dawn, and I am off to the hills to get Mr. Q—— a bloom of the lily he wants, so don't expect me till you see me. I have taken the white donkey; and nurse and a couple of boys are coming with me—also something to eat, as I may be away all day, as I am determined to get the lily if I have to go twenty miles for it.—FLOSSIE.'

'I hope she will be all right,' I said, a little anxiously; 'I never meant her to trouble after the flower.'

'Ah, Flossie can look after herself,' said her mother; 'she often goes off in this way like a true child of the wilderness.' But Mr. Mackenzie, who came in just then and saw the note for the first time, looked rather grave though he said nothing.

After breakfast was over I took him aside and asked him if it would not be possible to send after the girl and get her back, having in view the possibility of there still being some Masai hanging about, at whose hands she might come to harm.

'I fear it would be of no use,' he answered. 'She may be fifteen miles off by now, and it is impossible to say what path she has taken. There are the hills;' and he pointed to a long range of rising ground stretching almost parallel with the course followed by the river Tana, but gradually sloping down to a dense bush-clad plain about five miles short of the house.

Here I suggested that we might get up the great tree over the house and search the country round with a spyglass; and this, after Mr. Mackenzie had given some orders to his people to try and follow Flossie's spoor, we proceeded to do.

The ascent of the mighty tree was rather a jumpy performance, even with a sound rope ladder fixed at both ends to climb up, at least to a landsman; but Good came up like a lamplighter.

On reaching the height at which the first fern-shaped boughs sprung from the bole, we stepped without any difficulty upon a platform made of boards, nailed from one bough to another, and large enough to accommodate a dozen people. As for the view, it was simply glorious. In every direction the bush rolled away in great billows for miles and miles, as far as the glass would show, only here and there broken by the brighter green of patches of cultivation, or by the glittering surfaces of lakes. To the north-west, Kenia reared his mighty head, and we could trace the Tana River curling like a silver snake almost from his feet, and far away beyond us towards the ocean. It is a glorious country, and only wants the hand of civilised man to make it a most productive one.

But look as we would, we could see no signs of Flossie and her donkey, so at last had to come down disappointed. On reaching the verandah I found Umslopogaas sitting there, slowly and lightly sharpening his axe with a small whetstone he always carried with him.

'What doest thou, Umslopogaas?' I asked.

'I smell blood,' was the answer; and I could get no more out of him.

After dinner we again went up the tree and searched the surrounding country with a spyglass, but without result. When we came down Umslopogaas was still sharpening 'Inkosi-kaas,' although she already had an edge like a razor. Standing in front of him, and regarding him with a mixture of fear and fascination, was Alphonse. And certainly he did seem an alarming object—sitting there, Zulu fashion, on his haunches, a wild sort of look upon his intensely savage and yet intellectual face, sharpening, sharpening, sharpening at the murderous-looking axe.

'Oh, the monster, the horrible man!' said the little French cook, lifting his hands in amazement. 'See but the hole in his head; the skin beats up and down like a baby's! Who would nurse such a baby?' and he burst out laughing at the idea.

For a moment Umslopogaas looked up from his sharpening, and a sort of evil light played in his dark eyes.

'What does the little "buffalo-heifer" [so named by Umslopogaas, on account of his mustachios and feminine characteristics] say? Let him be careful, or I will cut his horns. Beware, little man monkey, beware!'

Unfortunately Alphonse, who was getting over his fear of him, went on laughing at '*ce drôle d'un monsieur noir.*' I was about to warn him to desist, when suddenly the huge Zulu bounded off the verandah on to the open space where Alphonse was standing, his features alive with a sort of malicious enthusiasm, and began swinging the axe round and round over the Frenchman's head.

'Stand still,' I shouted; 'do not move as you value your life—he will not hurt you;' but I doubt if Alphonse heard me, being, fortunately for himself, almost petrified with horror.

Then followed the most extraordinary display of sword, or rather of axemanship, that I ever saw. First of all the axe went flying round and round over the top of Alphonse's head, with an angry whirl and such extraordinary swiftness that it looked like a continuous band of steel, ever getting nearer and yet nearer to that unhappy individual's skull, till at last it grazed it as it flew. Then suddenly the motion was changed, and it seemed to literally flow up and down his body and limbs, never more than an eighth of an inch from them, and yet never striking them. It was a wonderful sight to see the little man fixed there, having apparently realised that to move would be to run the risk of sudden death, while his black tormentor towered over him, and wrapped him round with the quick flashes of the axe. For a minute or more this went on, till suddenly I saw the moving brightness travel down the side of Alphonse's face, and then outwards and stop. As it did so a tuft of something black fell to the ground; it was the tip of one of the little Frenchman's curling mustachios.

Umslopogaas leant upon the handle of Inkosi-kaas, and broke into a long, low laugh; and Alphonse, overcome with fear, sank into a sitting posture on the ground, whilst we stood astonished at this exhibition of almost superhuman skill and mastery of a weapon. 'Inkosi-kaas is sharp enough,' he shouted; 'the blow that clipped the "buffalo-heifer's" horn would have split a man from the crown to the chin. Few could have struck it but I; none could have struck it and not taken off the shoulder too. Look, thou little heifer! Am I a good man to laugh at, thinkest thou? For a space hast thou stood within a hair's-breadth of death. Laugh not again, lest the hair's-breadth be wanting. I have spoken.'

'What meanest thou by such mad tricks?' I asked of Umslo-

pogaas, indignantly. 'Surely thou art mad. Twenty times didst thou go near to slaying the man.'

'And yet, Macumazahn, I slew not. Thrice as Inkosi-kaas flew the spirit entered into me to end him, and send her crashing through his skull; but I did not. Nay, it was but a jest; but tell the "heifer" that it is not well to mock at such as I. Now I go to make a shield, for I smell blood, Macumazahn—of a truth I smell blood. Before the battle hast thou not seen the vultures grow of a sudden in the sky? They smell the blcod, Macumazahn, and my scent is more keen than theirs. There is a dry ox-hide down yonder; I go to make a shield.'

'That is an uncomfortable sort of retainer of yours,' said Mr. Mackenzie, who had witnessed this extraordinary scene. 'He has frightened Alphonse out of his wits; look!' and he pointed to the Frenchman, who, with a scared white face and trembling limbs, was making his way into the house. 'I don't think that he will ever laugh at "le monsieur noir" again.'

'Yes,' answered I, 'it is ill jesting with such as he. When he is roused he is like a fiend, and yet he has a kind heart in his own fierce way. I remember years ago seeing him nurse a sick child for a week. He is a strange character, but true as steel, and a strong stick to rest on in danger.'

'He says he smells blood,' said Mr. Mackenzie. 'I only trust he is not right. I am getting very fearful about my little girl. She must have gone far, or she would be home by now. It is half-past three o'clock.'

I pointed out that she had taken food with her, and very likely would not in the ordinary course of events return till nightfall; but I myself felt very anxious, and fear that my anxiety betrayed itself.

Shortly after this, the people whom Mr. Mackenzie had sent out to search for Flossie returned, stating that they had followed the spoor of the donkey for a couple of miles and had then lost it on some stony ground, nor could they discover it again. They had, however, scoured the country far and wide, but without success.

After this the afternoon wore drearily on, and towards evening, there still being no signs of Flossie, our anxiety grew very keen. As for the poor mother, she was quite prostrated by her fears, and no wonder, but the father kept his head wonderfully well. Everything that could be done was done: people were sent out in all directions, shots were fired, and a continuous outlook kept from the great tree, but without avail.

And then at last it grew dark, and still no sign of fair-haired little Flossie.

At eight o'clock we had supper. It was but a sorrowful meal, and Mrs. Mackenzie did not appear at it. We three also were very silent, for in addition to our natural anxiety as to the fate of the child, we were weighed down by the sense that we had brought this trouble on the head of our kind host. When supper was nearly at an end I made an excuse to leave the table. I wanted to get outside and think the situation over. I went on to the verandah and, having lit my pipe, sat down on a seat about a dozen feet from the right-hand end of the structure, which was, as the reader may remember, exactly opposite one of the narrow doors of the protecting wall that enclosed the house and flower-garden. I had been sitting there perhaps six or seven minutes when I thought I heard the door move. I looked in that direction and listened, but being unable to make out anything, concluded that I must have been mistaken. It was a darkish night, the moon not having yet risen.

Another minute passed, when suddenly something round fell with a soft but heavy thud upon the stone flooring of the verandah, and came bounding and rolling along past me. For a moment I did not rise, but sat wondering what it could be. Finally, I concluded it must have been an animal. Just then, however, another idea struck me, and I got up quick enough. The thing lay quite still a few feet beyond me. I put down my hand towards it and it did not move: clearly it was not an animal. My hand touched it. It was soft and warm and heavy. Hurriedly I lifted it and held it up against the faint starlight.

It was a newly severed human head!

I am an old hand and not easily upset, but I own that that ghastly sight made me feel sick. How had the thing come there? Whose was it? I put it down and ran to the little doorway. I could see nothing, hear nobody. I was about to go out into the darkness beyond, but remembering that to do so was to expose myself to the risk of being stabbed, I drew back, shut the door, and bolted it. Then I returned to the verandah, and in as careless a voice as I could command called Curtis. I fear, however, that my tones must have betrayed me, for not only Sir Henry but also Good and Mackenzie rose from the table and came hurrying out.

'What is it?' said the clergyman, anxiously.

Then I had to tell them.

Mr. Mackenzie turned pale as death under his red skin. We were standing opposite the hall door and there was a light in it so that I could see. He snatched the head up by the hair and held it in the light.

'It is the head of one of the men who accompanied Flossie,' he said with a gasp. 'Thank God it is not hers!'

We all stood and stared at each other aghast. What was to be done?

Just then there was a knocking at the door that I had bolted, and a voice cried, 'Open, my father, open!'

The door was unlocked, and in fled a terrified man. He was one of the spies who had been sent out.

'My father,' he cried, 'the Masai are on us! A great body of them have passed round the hill and are moving towards the old stone kraal down by the little stream. My father, make strong thy heart! In the midst of them I saw the white ass, and on it sat the Waterlily [Flossie]. An Elmoran [young warrior] led the ass, and by its side walked the nurse weeping. The men who went with her in the morning I saw not.'

'Was the child alive?' asked Mr. Mackenzie, hoarsely.

'She was white as the snow but well, my father. They passed quite close to me, and looking up from where I lay hid I saw her face against the sky.'

'God help her and us!' groaned the clergyman.

'How many are there of them?' I asked.

'More than two hundred—two hundred and half a hundred.'

Once more we looked one on the other. What was to be done? Just then there rose a loud insistent cry outside the wall.

'Open the door, white man; open the door! A herald—a herald to speak with thee.' Thus cried the voice.

Umslopogaas ran to the wall, and, reaching with his long arms to the coping, lifted his head above it and gazed over.

'I see but one man,' he said. 'He is armed, and carries a basket in his hand.'

'Open the door,' I said. 'Umslopogaas, take thine axe and stand thereby. Let one man pass. If another follow, slay.'

The door was unbarred. In the shadow of the wall stood Umslopogaas, his axe raised above his head to strike. Just then the moon came out. There was a moment's pause, and then in stalked a Masai Elmoran, clad in the full war panoply that I have already described, but bearing a large basket in his hand. The moonlight shone bright upon his great spear as he walked. He

was physically a splendid man, apparently about thirty-five years of age. Indeed, none of the Masai that I saw were under six feet high, though mostly quite young. When he got opposite to us he halted, put down the basket, and struck the spike of his spear into the ground, so that it stood upright.

'Let us talk,' he said. 'The first messenger we sent to you could not talk;' and he pointed to the head which lay upon the paving of the stoep—a ghastly sight in the moonlight; 'but I have words to speak if ye have ears to hear. Also I bring presents;' and he pointed to the basket and laughed with an air of swaggering insolence that is perfectly indescribable, and yet which one could not but admire, seeing that he was surrounded by enemies.

'Say on,' said Mr. Mackenzie.

'I am the "Lygonani" [war captain] of a part of the Masai of the Guasa Amboni. I and my men followed these three white men,' and he pointed to Sir Henry, Good, and myself, 'but they were too clever for us, and escaped hither. We have a quarrel with them, and are going to kill them.'

'Are you, my friend?' said I to myself.

'In following these men we this morning caught two black men, one black woman, a white donkey, and a white girl. One of the black men we killed—there is his head upon the pavement; the other ran away. The black woman, the little white girl, and the white ass we took and brought with us. In proof thereof have I brought this basket that she carried. Is it not thy daughter's basket?'

Mr. Mackenzie nodded, and the warrior went on.

'Good! With thee and thy daughter we have no quarrel, nor do we wish to harm thee, save as to thy cattle, which we have already gathered, two hundred and forty head—a beast for every man's father.'[1]

Here Mr. Mackenzie gave a groan, as he greatly valued this herd of cattle, which he bred with much care and trouble.

'So, save for the cattle, thou mayst go free; more especially,' he added frankly, glancing at the wall, 'as this place would be a difficult one to take. But as to these men it is otherwise; we have followed them for eight days, and must kill them. Were we to return to our kraal without having done so, all the girls would make a mock of us. So, however troublesome it may be, they must die.

[1] The Masai Elmoran or young warrior can own no property, so all the booty they may win in battle belongs to their fathers alone.—A. Q.

'Now I have a proposition for thine ear. We would not harm the little girl; she is too fair to harm, and has besides a brave spirit. Give us one of these three men—a life for a life—and we will let her go, and throw in the black woman with her also. This is a fair offer, white man. We ask but for one, not for the three; we must take another opportunity to kill the other two. I do not even pick my man, though I should prefer the big one,' pointing to Sir Henry; 'he looks strong, and would die more slowly.'

'And if I say I will not yield the man?' said Mr. Mackenzie.

'Nay, say not so, white man,' answered the Masai, 'for then thy daughter dies at dawn, and the woman with her says thou hast no other child. Were she older I would take her for a servant; but as she is so young I will slay her with my own hand —aye, with this very spear. Thou canst come and see, an' thou wilt. I give thee a safe conduct;' and the fiend laughed aloud at his brutal jest.

Meanwhile I had been thinking rapidly, as one does in emergencies, and had come to the conclusion that I would exchange myself against Flossie. I scarcely like to mention the matter for fear it should be misunderstood. Pray do not let any one be misled into thinking that there was anything heroic about this, or any such nonsense. It was merely a matter of common sense and common justice. My life was an old and worthless one, hers was young and valuable. Her death would pretty well kill her father and mother also, whilst nobody would be much the worse for mine; indeed, several charitable institutions would have cause to rejoice thereat. It was indirectly through me that the dear little girl was in her present position. Lastly, a man was better fitted to meet death in such a peculiarly awful form than a sweet young girl. Not, however, that I meant to let these gentry torture me to death—I am far too much of a coward to allow of that, being naturally a timid man; my plan was to see the girl safely exchanged and then to shoot myself, trusting that the Almighty would take the peculiar circumstances of the case into consideration and pardon the act. All this and more went through my mind in very few seconds.

'All right, Mackenzie,' I said, 'you can tell the man that I will exchange myself against Flossie, only I stipulate that she shall be safely in this house before they kill me.'

'Eh?' said Sir Henry and Good simultaneously. 'That you don't.'

'No, no,' said Mr. Mackenzie, 'I will have no man's blood upon my hands. If it please God that my daughter die this awful death, His will be done. You are a brave man (which I am not by any means) and a noble man, Quatermain, but you shall not go.'

'If nothing else turns up I shall go,' I said decidedly.

'This is an important matter,' said Mackenzie, addressing the Lygonani, 'and we must think it over. You shall have our answer at dawn.'

'Very well, white man,' answered the savage indifferently; 'only remember if thy answer is late thy little white bud will never grow into a flower, that is all, for I shall cut it with this,' and he touched the spear. 'I should have thought that thou wouldst play a trick and attack us at night, but I know from the woman with the girl that your men are down at the coast, and that thou hast but twenty men here. It is not wise, white man,' he added with a laugh, 'to keep so small a garrison for your "boma" [kraal]. Well, good night, and good night to you also, other white men, whose eyelids I shall soon close once and for all. At dawn thou wilt bring me word. If not remember it shall be as I have said.' Then turning to Umslopogaas, who had all the while been standing behind him and shepherding him as it were, 'Open the door for me, fellow, quick now.'

This was too much for the old chief's patience. For the last half hour his lips had been, figuratively speaking, positively watering over the Masai Lygonani, and this he could not stand. Placing his long hand on the Elmoran's shoulder he gripped it and gave him such a twist as brought him face to face with himself. Then, thrusting his fierce countenance to within a few inches of the Masai's evil feather-framed features, he said in a low growling voice:

'Seest thou me?'

'Ay, fellow, I see thee.'

'And seest thou this?' and he held Inkosi-kaas before his eyes.

'Ay, fellow, I see the toy; what of it?'

'Thou Masai dog, thou boasting windbag, thou capturer of little girls, with this "toy" will I hew thee limb from limb. Well for thee that thou art a herald, or even now would I strew thy members about the grass.'

The Masai shook his great spear and laughed long and loud as he answered, 'I would that thou stoodst against me man to man, and we would see,' and again he turned to go, still laughing.

'Thou shalt stand against me man to man, be not afraid,' replied Umslopogaas, still in the same ominous voice. 'Thou shalt stand face to face with Umslopogaas, of the blood of Chaka, of the people of the Amazulu, a captain in the regiment of the Nkomabakosi, as many have done before, and bow thyself to Inkosi-kaas, as many have done before. Ay, laugh on, laugh on! to-morrow night shall the jackals laugh as they crunch thy ribs.'

When the Lygonani had gone, one of us thought of opening the basket he had brought as a proof that Flossie was really their prisoner. On lifting the lid it was found to contain a most lovely specimen of both bulb and flower of the Goya lily, which I have already described, in full bloom and quite uninjured, and what was more a note in Flossie's childish hand written in pencil upon a greasy piece of paper that had been used to wrap up some food in.

'DEAREST FATHER AND MOTHER,' ran the note, — 'The Masai caught us when we were coming home with the lily. I tried to escape but could not. They killed Tom; the other man ran away. They have not hurt nurse and me, but say that they mean to exchange us against one of Mr. Quatermain's party. *I will have nothing of the sort.* Do not let anybody give his life for me. Try and attack them at night; they are going to feast on three bullocks they have stolen and killed. I have my pistol, and if no help comes by dawn I will shoot myself. They shall not kill me. If so, remember me always, dearest father and mother. I am very frightened, but I trust in God. I dare not write any more as they are beginning to notice. Good-bye. —FLOSSIE.'

Scrawled across the outside of this was 'Love to Mr. Quatermain. They are going to take up the basket, so he will get the lily.'

When I read those words, written by that brave little girl in an hour of danger sufficiently near and horrible to have turned the brain of a strong man, I own I wept, and once more in my heart I vowed that she should not die while my life could be given to save her.

Then eagerly, quickly, almost fiercely, we fell to discussing the situation. Again I said that I would go, and again Mackenzie negatived it, and Curtis and Good, like the true men that they are, vowed that, if I did, they would go with me, and die back to back with me.

'It is,' I said at last, 'absolutely necessary that an effort of some sort should be made before the morning.'

'Then let us attack them with what force we can muster, and take our chance,' said Sir Henry.

'Ay, ay,' growled Umslopogaas, in Zulu; 'spoken like a man, Incubu. What is there to be afraid of? Two hundred and fifty Masai, forsooth! How many are we? The chief there [Mr. Mackenzie] has twenty men, and thou, Macumazahn, hast five men, and there are also five white men—that is, thirty men in all—enough, enough. Listen now, Macumazahn, thou who art very clever and old in war. What says the maid? These men eat and make merry; let it be their funeral feast. What said the dog whom I hope to hew down at daybreak? That he feared no attack because we were so few. Knowest thou the old kraal where the men have camped? I saw it this morning; it is thus:' and he drew an oval on the floor; 'here is the big entrance, filled up with thorn bushes, and giving on to a steep rise. Why, Incubu, thou and I with axes will hold it against an hundred men striving to break out! Look, now; thus shall the battle go. Just as the light begins to glint upon the oxen's horns—not before, or it will be too dark, and not later, or they will be awakening and perceive us—let Bougwan creep round with ten men to the top end of the kraal, where the narrow entrance is. Let them silently slay the sentry there so that he makes no sound, and stand ready. Then, Incubu, let thou and I and one of the Askari—the one with the broad chest—he is a brave man—creep to the wide entrance that is filled with thorn bushes, and there also slay the sentry, and armed with battle-axes take our stand also one on each side of the pathway, and one a few paces beyond to deal with such as pass the twain at the gate. It is there that the rush will come. That will leave sixteen men. Let these men be divided into two parties, with one of which shalt thou go, Macumazahn, and with one the "praying man" [Mr. Mackenzie], and, all armed with rifles, let them make their way one to the right side of the kraal and one to the left; and when thou, Macumazahn, lowest like an ox, all shall open fire with the guns upon the sleeping men, being very careful not to hit the little maid. Then shall Bougwan at the far end and his ten men raise their war-cry, and, springing over the wall, put the Masai there to the sword. And it shall happen that, being yet heavy with food and sleep, and bewildered by the firing of the guns, the falling of men, and the spears of Bougwan, the soldiers shall rise and rush like wild game towards

the thorn-stopped entrance, and there the bullets from either side shall plough through them, and there shall Incubu and the Askari and I wait for those who break through. Such is my plan, Macumazahn; if thou hast a better, name it.'

When he had done, I explained to the others such portions of this scheme as they had failed to understand, and they all joined with me in expressing the greatest admiration of the acute and skilful programme devised by the old Zulu, who was, indeed, in his own savage fashion the finest general I ever knew. After some discussion we determined to accept the scheme, as it stood, as being the best possible under the circumstances, and giving as fair a chance of success as such a forlorn hope would admit of—which, however, considering the enormous odds and the character of our foe, was not very great.

'Ah, old lion!' I said to Umslopogaas, 'thou knowest how to lie in wait as well as how to bite, where to seize as well as where to hang on.'

'Aye, aye, Macumazahn,' he answered. 'For thirty years have I been a warrior, and have seen many things. It will be a good fight. I smell blood—I tell thee, I smell blood.'

CHAPTER VI.

THE NIGHT WEARS ON.

As may be imagined, at the very first sign of a Masai the entire population of the Mission Station had sought refuge inside the stout stone wall, and were now to be seen—men, women, and countless children—huddled up together in little groups, and all talking at once in awed tones of the awfulness of Masai manners and customs, and of the fate that they had to expect if those bloodthirsty savages succeeded in getting over the stone wall.

Immediately after we had settled upon the outline of our plan of action as suggested by Umslopogaas, Mr. Mackenzie sent for four sharp boys of from twelve to fifteen years of age, and despatched them to various points from whence they could keep an outlook upon the Masai camp, with orders to report from time to time what was going on. Other lads and even women were stationed at intervals along the wall in order to guard against the possibility of surprise.

After this the twenty men who formed his whole available fighting force were summoned by our host into the square formed by the house, and there, standing by the bole of the great conifer, he earnestly addressed them and our four Askari. Indeed, it formed a very impressive scene—one not likely to be forgotten by anybody who witnessed it. Immediately by the tree stood the angular form of Mr. Mackenzie, one arm outstretched as he talked, and the other resting against the giant bole, his hat off, and his plain but kindly face clearly betraying the anguish of his mind. Next to him was his poor wife, who, seated on a chair, had her face hidden in her hand. On the other side of her was Alphonse, looking exceedingly uncomfortable, and behind him stood the three of us, with Umslopogaas' grim and towering form in the background, resting, as usual, on his axe. In front stood and squatted the group of armed men—some with rifles in their hands, and others with spears and shields—following with eager attention every word that fell from the speaker's lips. The white light of the moon peering in beneath the lofty boughs threw a strange wild glamour over the scene, whilst the melancholy soughing of the night wind passing through the millions of pine needles overhead added a sadness of its own to what was already a sufficiently tragic occasion.

'Men,' said Mr. Mackenzie, after he had put all the circumstances of the case fully and clearly before them, and explained to them the proposed plan of our forlorn hope—'men, for years I have been a good friend to ye, protecting ye, teaching ye, guarding ye and yours from harm, and ye have prospered with me. Ye have seen my child—the Waterlily, as ye call her—grow year by year, from tenderest infancy to tender childhood, and from childhood on towards maidenhood. She has been your children's playmate, she has helped to tend ye when sick and ye have loved her.'

'We have,' said a deep voice, 'and we will die to save her.'

'I thank ye from my heart—I thank ye. Sure am I that now, in this hour of darkest trouble; now that her young life is like to be cut off by cruel and savage men—who of a truth "know not what they do"—ye will strive your best to save her, and to save me and her mother from broken hearts. Think, too, of your own wives and children. If she dies, her death will be followed by an attack upon us here, and at the best, even if we hold our own, your houses and gardens will be destroyed, and your goods and cattle swept away. I am, as ye well know, a man of peace. Never

in all these years have I lifted my hand to shed man's blood; but now I say strike, strike, in the name of God, Who bade us protect our lives and homes. Swear to me,' he went on with added fervour—'swear to me that whilst a man of you remains alive ye will strive your uttermost with me and with these brave white men to save the child from a bloody and a cruel death.'

'Say no more, my father,' said the same deep voice, that belonged to a stalwart elder of the Mission; 'we swear it. May we and ours die the death of dogs and our bones be thrown to the jackals and the kites if we break the oath! It is a fearful thing to do, my father, so few to strike at so many, yet will we do it or die in the doing. We swear!'

'Ay, so say we all,' chimed in the others.

'So say we all,' said I.

'It is well,' went on Mr. Mackenzie. 'Ye are true men and not broken reeds to lean on. And now, friends—white and black together—let us kneel and offer up our humble supplication to the Throne of Power, praying that He in the hollow of Whose hand lie all our lives, Who giveth life and giveth death, may be pleased to make strong our hands that we may prevail in what awaits us at the morning's light.'

And he knelt down, an example that we all followed except Umslopogaas, who still stood in the background, grimly leaning on Inkosi-kaas. The fierce old Zulu had no gods, and worshipped nought, unless it were his battle-axe.

'Oh God of gods!' began the clergyman, his deep voice, tremulous with emotion, echoing up in the silence even to the leafy roof; 'Protector of the oppressed, Refuge of those in danger, Guardian of the helpless, hear Thou our prayer! Almighty Father, to Thee we come in supplication. Hear Thou our prayer! Behold, one child hast Thou given us—an innocent child, nurtured in Thy knowledge—and now she lies beneath the shadow of the sword, in danger of a fearful death at the hands of cruel men. Be with her now, oh God, and comfort her! Save her, oh Heavenly Father! Oh God of battle, Who teacheth our hands to war and our fingers to fight, in Whose strength are hid the destinies of men, be Thou with us in the hour of strife. When we go forth into the shadow of death make Thou us strong to conquer. Breathe Thou upon our foes and scatter them; turn Thou their strength to water, and bring their high-blown pride to nought; compass us about with Thy protection; throw over us the shield of Thy power; forget us not now in the hour of our sore distress;

help us now that the cruel man would dash our little ones against the stones! Hear Thou our prayer! And for those of us who, kneeling now on earth in health before Thee, shall at the sunrise adore Thy Presence on the Throne, hear our prayer! Make them clean, oh God; wash away their offences in the blood of the Lamb; and when their spirits pass, oh receive Thou them into the haven of the just. Go forth, oh Father, go forth with us into the battle, as with the Israelites of old. Oh God of battles, hear Thou our prayer!'

He ceased, and after a moment's silence we all rose, and then began our preparations in good earnest. As Umslopogaas said, it was time to stop 'talking' and get to business. The men who were to form each little party were carefully selected, and still more carefully and minutely instructed as to what was to be done. After much consideration it was agreed that the ten men led by Good, whose duty it was to stampede the camp, were not to carry fire-arms; that is with the exception of Good himself, who had a revolver as well as a short sword—the Masai 'sime' which I had taken from the body of our poor servant who was murdered in the canoe. We feared that if they had fire-arms the result of three cross-fires carried on at once would be that some of our own people would be shot; besides, it appeared to all of us that the work they had to do would best be carried out with cold steel—especially to Umslopogaas, who was, indeed, a great advocate of cold steel. We had with us four Winchester repeating rifles, besides half-a-dozen Martinis. I armed myself with one of the repeaters—my own; an excellent weapon for this kind of work, where great rapidity of fire is desirable, and fitted with ordinary flap-sights instead of the usual cumbersome sliding mechanism which they generally have. Mr. Mackenzie took another, and the two remaining ones were given to two of his men who understood the use of them and were noted shots. The Martinis and some rifles of Mr. Mackenzie's were served out, together with a plentiful supply of ammunition, to the other natives who were to form the two parties whose duty it was to be to open fire from separate sides of the kraal on the sleeping Masai, and who were fortunately all more or less accustomed to the use of a gun.

As for Umslopogaas, we know how he was armed—with an axe. It may be remembered that he, Sir Henry, and the strongest of the Askari were to hold the thorn-stopped entrance to the kraal against the anticipated rush of men striving to escape. Of course, for such a purpose as this guns were useless. Therefore Sir Henry

and the Askari proceeded to arm themselves in like fashion. It so happened that Mr. Mackenzie had in his little store a selection of the very best steel English-made hammer-backed axe-heads. Sir Henry selected one of these weighing about two and a half pounds and very broad in the blade, and the Askari took another a size smaller. After Umslopogaas had put an extra edge on these two axe-heads, we proceeded to fix them to three feet six helves, of which Mr. Mackenzie fortunately had some in stock, made of a light but exceedingly tough native wood, something like English ash, only more springy. When two suitable helves had been selected with great care and the ends of the haft notched to prevent the hand from slipping, the axe-heads were fixed on them as firmly as possible, and the weapons immersed in a bucket of water for half an hour. The result of this was to swell the wood in the socket in such a fashion that nothing short of burning would get it out again. When this important matter had been attended to by Umslopogaas, I went into my room and proceeded to open a little tin-lined deal case, which had not been undone since we left England, and which contained—what do you think? —nothing more nor less than four mail shirts.

It had happened to us three on a previous journey that we had made in another part of Africa to owe our lives to iron shirts of native make, and remembering this I had suggested before we started on our present hazardous expedition that we should have some made to fit us. There was a little difficulty about this, as armour-making is pretty well an extinct art, but they can do most things in the way of steel work in Birmingham if they are put to it and you will pay the price, and the end of it was that they turned us out the loveliest steel shirts it is possible to see. The workmanship was exceedingly fine, the web being composed of thousands upon thousands of stout but tiny rings of the best steel made. These shirts, or rather steel-sleeved and high-necked jerseys, were lined with ventilated wash leather, were not bright, but browned like the barrel of a gun; and mine weighed exactly seven pounds and fitted me so well that I found I could wear it for days next my skin without being chafed. Sir Henry had two, one of the ordinary make, viz. a jersey with little dependent flaps meant to afford some protection to the upper part of the thighs, and another of his own design fashioned on the pattern of the garments advertised as 'combinations' and weighing twelve pounds. This combination shirt, of which the seat was made of wash-leather, protected the whole body down to

the knees, but was rather more cumbersome, inasmuch as it had to be laced up the back and, of course, involved some extra weight. With these shirts were what looked like four brown cloth travelling caps with ear pieces. Each of these caps was however, quilted with steel links so as to afford a most valuable protection for the head.

It seems almost laughable to talk of steel shirts in these days of bullets, against which they are of course quite useless; but where one has to do with savages, armed with cutting weapons such as assegais or battle-axes, they afford the most valuable protection, being, if well made, quite invulnerable to them. I have often thought that if only the English Government had in our savage wars, and more especially in the Zulu war, thought fit to serve out light steel shirts, there would be many a man alive to-day who, as it is, is dead and forgotten.

To return: on the present occasion we blessed our foresight in bringing these shirts, and also our good luck, in that they had not been stolen by our rascally bearers when they bolted with our goods. As Curtis had two, and, after considerable deliberation, had made up his mind to wear his combination one himself—the extra three or four pounds' weight being a matter of no account to so strong a man, and the protection afforded to the thighs being a very important matter to an individual not armed with a shield of any kind—I suggested that he should lend the other to Umslopogaas, who was to share the danger and the glory of his post. He readily consented, and called the Zulu, who came bearing Sir Henry's axe, which he had now fixed up to his satisfaction, with him. When we showed him the steel shirt, and explained to him that we wanted him to wear it, he at first declined, saying that he had fought in his own skin for thirty years, and that he was not going to begin now to fight in an iron one. Thereupon I took a heavy spear, and, spreading the shirt upon the floor, drove the spear down upon it with all my strength, the weapon rebounding without leaving a mark upon the tempered steel. This exhibition half converted him; and when I pointed out to him how necessary it was that he should not let any old-fashioned prejudices he might possess stand in the way of a precaution which might preserve a valuable life at a time when men were scarce, and also that if he wore this shirt he might dispense with a shield, and so have both hands free, he yielded at once, and proceeded to invest his great frame with the 'iron skin.' And indeed, although made for Sir Henry, it fitted

the great Zulu like a skin. The two men were almost of a height; and, though Curtis looked the bigger man, I am inclined to think that the difference was more imaginary than real, the fact being that, although he was plumper and rounder, he was not really bigger, except in the arm. Umslopogaas had comparatively speaking thin arms, but they were as strong as wire ropes. At any rate, when they both stood, axe in hand, invested in the brown mail, which clung to their mighty forms like a web garment, showing the swell of every muscle and the curve of every line, they formed a pair that any ten men might shrink from meeting.

It was now nearly one o'clock in the morning, and the spies reported that, after having drunk the blood of the oxen and eaten enormous quantities of meat, the Masai were going to sleep round their watchfires; but that sentries had been posted at each opening of the kraal. Flossie, they added, was sitting not far from the wall in the centre of the western side of the kraal, and by her were the nurse and the white donkey, which was tethered to a peg. Her feet were bound with a rope, and warriors were lying about all round her.

As there was absolutely nothing further that could be done then we all took some supper, and went to lie down for a couple of hours. I could not help admiring the way in which old Umslopogaas flung himself down upon the floor, and, unmindful of what was hanging over him, instantly sank into a deep sleep. I don't know how it was with the others, but I could not do as much. Indeed, as is usual with me on these occasions, I am sorry to say that I felt rather frightened; and, now that some of the enthusiasm had gone out of me, and I began to calmly contemplate what we had undertaken to do, truth compels me to add that I did not like it. We were but thirty men all told, a good many of whom were no doubt quite unused to fighting, and we were going to tackle two hundred and fifty of the fiercest, bravest, and most formidable savages in Africa, who, to make matters worse, were protected by a stone wall. It was, indeed, a mad undertaking, and what made it even madder was the exceeding improbability of our being able to take up our positions without attracting the notice of the sentries. Of course if we once did that—and any slight accident, such as the chance discharge of a gun, might do it—we were done for, for the whole camp would be up in a second, and our only hope lay in a surprise.

The bed whereon I lay indulging in these uncomfortable re-

flections was near an open window that looked on to the verandah, through which came an extraordinary sound of groaning and weeping. For a time I could not make out what it was, but at last I got up and putting my head out of the window stared about. Presently I saw a dim figure kneeling on the end of the verandah and beating his breast—in which I recognised Alphonse. Not being able to understand his French talk or what on earth he was at, I called to him and asked him what he was doing.

'Ah, monsieur,' he sighed, 'I do make prayer for the souls of those whom I shall slay to-night.'

'Indeed,' I said, 'then I wish that you would do it a little more quietly.'

Alphonse retreated, and I heard no more of his groans. And so the time passed, till at length Mr. Mackenzie called me in a whisper through the window, for of course everything had now to be done in the most absolute silence. 'Three o'clock,' he said, 'we must begin to move at half-past.'

I told him to come in and presently he entered, and I am bound to say that if it had not been that just then I had not got a laugh anywhere about me, I should have exploded at the sight he presented armed for battle. To begin with, he had on a clergyman's black swallow-tail and a kind of broad-rimmed black felt hat, both of which he had donned on account, he said, of their dark colour. In his hand was the Winchester repeating rifle we had lent him; and stuck in an elastic cricketing belt, like those worn by English boys, were, first, a huge buckhorn-handled carving knife with a guard to it, and next a long-barrelled Colt's revolver.

'Ah, my friend,' he said, seeing me staring at his belt, 'you are looking at my "carver." I thought it might come in handy if we came to close quarters; it is excellent steel, and many is the pig I have killed with it.'

By this time everybody was up and dressing. I put on a light Norfolk jacket over my mail shirt in order to have a pocket handy to hold my cartridges, and buckled on my revolver. Good did the same, but Sir Henry put on nothing except his mail shirt, steel-lined cap, and a pair of 'veldt-schoons' or soft hide shoes, his legs being bare from the knees down. His revolver he strapped on round his middle outside the armoured shirt.

Meanwhile Umslopogaas was mustering the men in the square under the big tree and going the rounds to see that each was

properly armed, etc. At the last moment we made one change. Finding that two of the men who were to have gone with the firing parties knew little or nothing of guns, but were good spearsmen, we took away their rifles, supplied them with shields and long spears of the Masai pattern and told them off to join Curtis, Umslopogaas, and the Askari in holding the wide opening; it having become clear to us that three men, however brave and strong, were too few for the work.

(*To be continued.*)

Mysterious Disappearances.

'Land in your eye!' said the mate, who was looking through the telescope.

Two Years Before the Mast.

SOMETHING of humour goes to the fancy of a shipmaster homeward-bound with a mind oppressed by the discovery of land that is literally 'all in his eye.' The emotions excited by Samuel Weller's lantern in the soul of the scientific gentleman would be trifling compared with the fine triumph of a man who is the first to discover land. Though it be but a rock—nay, a reef or shoal—is it not a surer hand than that of the greatest poet for the carrying of one's name down to the remotest posterity? What as a memorial so excellent and enduring as a piece of mother-earth? Every new chart enlarges the bounds of the discoverer's fame. Take such a man as Bugsby. In what old black-letter book the life of him lies pierced through and through by worms I know not. I might search Limehouse and Poplar and find no oldest inhabitant able to tell me a word about Bugsby, whether he was a great merchant or a haggard water-thief, whether he fetched his last breath in Execution Dock, or died very honestly in a four-poster. Yet so long as the silver Thames shall flow, so long (I am afraid) will its translucent tide —particularly in the neighbourhood of the East India Docks and the aromatic Isle of Dogs—go on murmuring the elegant name of Bugsby. Bugsby's Reach! Think of the enormous fame of Bugsby! Then should not a master-mariner, sailing home with an entry concerning a discovery of land in his log-book, feel extremely boastful and happy? Supposing it to be, as it almost always is in this age of an exhausted world, an island or a rock entirely 'in his eye': it will be the same to him; he will go to his grave as cocksure about it as if he had landed, hoisted the Union Jack, taken possession of it in the Queen's name, and called it by his own. Several nations may send forth ships to examine the spot: all whose commanders shall return and say

there is nothing to be seen. But the first discoverer of land is a being not to be easily cheated out of his convictions. 'Land-ho!' 'Whereaway?' 'Dead abeam!' and there it must stand, a piece of holy ground in our skipper's faith, latitude unquestionable, longitude exact, though a shift of wind or a new complexion of light would attenuate the solid object into a texture considerably thinner than the most difficult of the difficult airs of the mountain-tops.

Some islands have been unaffected dreams. Such was that shore which at the dawning of the day proved to be 'a land flat to our sight, and full of boscage, which made it show the more dark,' called by its discoverer New Atlantis. Such was that happy republic whose 'figure is not unlike a crescent; between its horns the sea comes in eleven miles broad, and spreads itself into a great bay.' Such, too, are the queer countries of Swift and Rabelais, and of several philosophers and poets, both of ancient and modern times. But, on the other hand, many of the old sea-girt demon-haunted rocks, the sunny and spice-sweetened and flower-coloured dominions of the ocean fairies, the little surf-washed principalities of dead seamen's souls, were as real as immoderate private conviction could render them.

The ocean was a huge mystery; and things which familiarity has long ago rendered insignificant were instinct with the terror, the splendour, the power, the majesty of the ocean, marvellous with the spirit of the measureless surface and the unfathomed depths, in the midst of which the early mariner found them. The enchanted island was real enough then. The sea-life was in its beginning: it was credulous as a man's childhood is; and, childlike, it took wonders and astonishments and impossibilities for the truth, and by sheer stress of prodigious faith made them so.

It must have been a noble time to go to sea in. A boy starts now as a sailor for India or China, and his head is full of fancies of elephants, ivory, gleaming towers, wild beasts, coloured men, and strange coins. His imagination reaches no further than his reading, or what has been told him. He pretty well knows what he is to see, and, of course, what he sees falls infinitely short of his expectations. But the ocean to the ancient mariner was pure Wonderland. Read what he has to say of the whale, the albatross, the iceberg. Coleridge catches the infantile awe and astonishment of the early voyagers in that exquisite 'rime' of his, in which the commonplaces of the deep show mighty and

fearful, as a sort of prodigies indeed, in the organ-utterance of the aged seaman of lean and Ember-week-like aspect. In these days if a man arrives home with a yarn of an uncharted rock his tale is to the last degree prosaic. The primitive navigator, on the other hand, would have found it a heap of extraordinary sights, a mass of miracles. Of course he had this advantage over us moderns: he could hint at its situation with such happy ambiguity as would defy discovery of it, even if the astrolabe and the cross-staff had been as precise as the sextant and the chronometer. But then he credited his own detections. His tales rendered his charts as queer to the eye as a star-map outlined with the zodiacal symbolism; and the ocean was like Spenser's poem for witcheries, marvels, necromancies, monstrous shapes, dreadful sounds, and mysterious islands. A romantic marine age, indeed, when Cape Fly-away was to be doubled, and No-man's land made!

Of the unparalleled isles of the ancient mariner many descriptions are extant. We hear of floating islands verdant with tropic vegetation suddenly rising to the surface of the sea, then foundering; of islands covered with medicinal herbs of greater efficacy even than the most largely advertised of modern pills, approaching the coast once in every seven years; of islands inhabited by women only; of islands merely enchanted, such as the old New England voyager's: 'very thick foggie weather, we sailed by an enchanted island, saw a great deal of filth and rubbish floating by the ship'; of islands formed of green meadows, which, says Mr. Wirt Sikes, 'were supposed to be the abode of the souls of certain Druids who, not holy enough to enter the heaven of the Christians, were still not wicked enough to be condemned to the tortures of Annwn, and so were accorded a place in this romantic sort of purgatorial paradise' ('British Goblins'). Here is one of Mandeville's twisters:—

'In an isle clept Crues, ben schippes withouten nayles of iren, or bonds, for the rockes of the adamandes; for they ben alle fulle there aboute in that see, that it is marveyle to spaken of. And gif a schippe passed by the marches, and hadde either iren bands or iren nayles, anon he sholde ben perishet. For the adamande of this kinde draws the iren to him; and so wolde it draw to him the schippe, because of the iren; that he sholde never departen fro it, ne never go thens.'[1]

[1] Quoted by Simon Wilkin in his edition of Sir Thomas Browne's Works.

How must the apprehension of encountering such islands as this, capable of wrecking a stout ship by magnetically extracting her iron bolts and so dissolving her, have set the knees of the sturdiest old sailors knocking one against another! Or figure the emotions with which they would view the prospect of going ashore upon such an island as we have here: 'There came a southe winde, and drof the shyppe northward, wheras they saw an ylonde full dirke and full of stench and smoke; and then they herde grete blowinge and blasting of belowes, but they might see noothynge, but herde grete thunderyng.'[1]

But these wonderful isles of the sea differed widely, some being very horrible and some being delightful. Oh, sings Thomas Moore:

> Oh, for some fair Formosa, such as he,
> The young Jew fabled of in the Indian sea,
> By nothing but its name of Beauty known,
> And which Queen Fancy might make all her own,
> Her fairy kingdom—take its peoples, lands,
> And tenements into her own bright hands,
> And make at least one earthly corner fit
> For love to live in, pure and exquisite!

Such an island as this was discovered and duly reported. First by a monk, who after sailing three days due east beheld a dark cloud, which when it cleared, revealed an island where 'was joy and mirthe enough.' This monk had apparently been induced to put to sea by the assurance of a mariner that he had met Judas floating on a rock! It was reserved for St. Brandan, however, to christen this delectable spot, and he called it the Blessed Island. Though its existence was fully believed in, its reputation faded as the years rolled by and nobody came home to say he had seen it. Then, all on a sudden, a Lisbon pilot stumbled upon it in a gale of wind, and so whetted the appetite of a Spanish nobleman for its felicities that his lordship fitted out an expedition for no other purpose than to find it. Happier for him had it remained a secret of the deep! he was wrecked upon it, fell into a trance that lasted some years, woke up mad, and returned to Spain with a long story of its being populated and ruled by a descendant of the last King of the Goths. The Spanish nobleman's experiences of its blessedness did not weaken the general faith in this ocean paradise; search was made for it so late as 1721, after which it disappears. Possibly it was the account of

[1] The Golden Legend.

some such an island as this that addled the brains of King Gavran and sent him seeking for the enchanted fairy meadows which floated upon the sea. He took his family with him, and he and they were never heard of more. But does not one see in all this how real those islands were, how seductive or repellent, and how delightfully different from the plain discoveries of the modern mariner, whether fancied or real?

'There are traditions,' says Mr. Wirt Sikes, 'of sailors who in the early part of the present century actually went ashore on the fairy islands, not knowing that they were such until they returned to their boats, when they were filled with awe at seeing the islands disappear from their sight, neither sinking in the sea nor floating away upon the waters, but simply vanishing suddenly.'

There is pleasantness and softness in the fancy of men in olden days putting forth to sea in search of islands of bliss, of insulated paradises as visionary as the poet's dream-like shore dimly resounding the wash of fairy breakers. The mariner must have spun his yarn to some purpose to awaken that thirsty desire of emigration. Many wonders, which might have remained hidden for ever in the dark ocean solitude, were lighted on by elderly gentlemen, with long hair and in costumes like bed-gowns, who were abroad searching for spots which the Jacks of that age had declared to be out and away superior to Eden. Maildun, a Celtic hero, one of these searchers, came across several islands filled with demons and monsters. He also encountered a Circe, and eventually the terrestrial paradise. But nothing particular seems to have come of these discoveries, and it is to be suspected that he did not take the trouble to verify their position. Another person, a saint, after a long search, found a holy island inhabited by twenty-four monks. How these monks managed to get there, in what condition the saint found them, whether they were spontaneous growths or a kind of melancholic survival of a state of society whose origin is now hopelessly indeterminable, we are not told. The same saint also met with an island whose inhabitants were fallen angels, and an island populated by fiends, who fell upon him and forced him to fly. In fact, if this saint is to be believed, he was quite the Captain Cook of his day. Yet his search after the Australia Incognita of bliss must, I think, be pronounced distinctly unsatisfactory, though one cannot but respect a theory of life that could impart the animation of adventure to a monastic bosom.

But much of what old ocean has of romance in its history lies in the ancient reports of its wonders, and in the interpretation of its legible characters by the child-like vision of the vanished shipmen Remove those Fortunate Islands, those Blessed Islands, those islands haunted by 'demon women wailing for their lovers': strike out from the annals those fables, faint with a strange light, of venturesome marine saints, of marvelling, bright-eyed, hook-nosed 'marineeres'; and I am afraid that what else of human poetry remains must be sought in the ship's forecastle. The very fish they saw, sporting in the yeast over the side, were as astonishing as the islands they passed. 'Along all that coast,' wrote Mr. Thomas Stevens, 'we often times saw a thing swimming upon the water like a cock's combe (which they call a ship at Guinea), but the colour much fairer; which combe standeth upon a thing almost like the swimmer of a fish in colour and bignesse, and beareth underneath in the water, strings, which save it from turning over.'[1] 'Od's fish' would seem an appropriate expression in the mouths of such navigators. What sort of thing is this cockscomb with strings? They wrapt up what they saw in quaint dark words; and their imagination operating on what they beheld set life a-teeming with marvels. Or mark them sailing past a headland: 'At this Cape lieth a great stone, to the which the barkes that passed thereby, were wont to make offerings of butter, meale and other victuals, thinking that unlesse they did so, their barkes or vessels should there perish, as it hath been oftentimes seene; and there it is very darke and mistie.'[2] Thus these poor old fellows, crossing themselves and singing a litany the while, propitiate the demon of the place with offerings of wet and dry stores, and you see them in fancy grouped in a body upon the deck watching with bowed heads and level alarmed gaze the sullen and dismal loom of the coast slowly veering away upon the quarter, as though the rugged, fog-swollen mass might at any moment shape itself into the titanic proportions of the fiend-king of the cold and barren land. To those early eyes such monsters revealed themselves, that the like was never heard of before or since. A crew would come home and say that they had met with an extraordinary animal that had a horse's body and a pig's head; another, that they had seen a similar wonder, only in this case it was a stag's body with horns; a third, that one day, the sea being calm, there rose close to the ship an animal that had the head and snout of a boar, and that spurted water through a

[1] Hacklyt. [2] Jenkins's Voyage in Hackluyt.

tube at the top of its head. Those were the halcyon days of the mermaid and the merman; leviathan then sported in twenty different terrible shapes, with mouth most hideously garnished with quadruple rows of teeth gaping moonwards; the sea-serpent wrapped the spinning globe about with a million leagues of scales; strange voices whispered in mysterious accents under the still, intertropic starlight, and shapes like the shadows of pinions moved upon the midnight air; spectral lanthorns were hung up by spirit-hands at the yard-arms and on the bowsprit-end, and, by their dull, graveyard illumination, cast a dismal complexion of death upon the upwards-staring faces of the mariners. I find those early seamen always sailing along as if possessed with an uncontrollable awe and reverence; they are punctual in their prayers; the whole story of their navigation is but a single-hearted reference to the majesty and mercy of the Most High; the atmosphere about them trembles to their devout muttering of *Aves* and the low chanting of psalms. The ocean was a mystery, the home and the haunt of creatures and objects not to be conceived by the understanding of men. The spirit and influence of the liquid solitude beyond the familiar line, over whose edge the sun rose or sank every day, you will find expressed with artless, most impressive power in the narrative of the first voyage of Columbus in Harris's Collection, briefly recited as the great admiral's adventures there are. For such and for earlier mariners—as indeed for later, down even to the times of Dampier, Shelvocke, Cowley, and the Dutch and French explorers of the early years of the last century—the sea could not but hold islands of enchantment, green places deep in its heart, on whose sands the water-nymphs, fresh from their coral pavilions, sat combing their yellow hair; paradisiacal abodes whose soil was brilliant with gold dust, over whose trees, radiant with fruit, flew birds of a plumage of dazzling splendour, in whose central valley girls of startling beauty might be seen in the moonlight threading with languid eyes the mazes of some amorous dance. Did not Herman Melville, so recently even as 1830 or 1840, find some such enchanted island as this in the Marquesas group?

The sudden emergence or subsidence of land would also help to confirm the ancient mariner in his belief in magic isles, and in their controlment by spells of necromancy. In an old nautical magazine, dated 1802, I find the following:—'On the seventh of June, 1790, the *Seahorse*, Captain Mayo, of Boston, from the coast of Africa, saw (in lat. 73 South) *a large point of land* sink

in one moment into the unfathomable deep! As soon as the crew recovered from the inexpressible horror which so tremendous a spectacle must have impressed on their minds, they steered up to some ships catching whales, and found that their men had been spectators of the same awful scene. The seamen involuntarily dropped down upon their knees and thanked God for their escape, having been on the same point of land a short time before its sudden disappearance.'

They saw the land disappear; but suppose no other vessels had been in company, and it had chanced that none of the crew had seen the land sink; you have then the seeds of an amazing relation. Figure a dead calm, all hands below at dinner, and nobody on deck but the man at the wheel nodding drowsily over the spokes. The land was plain enough in sight, a mile distant, perhaps, when the crew left the deck; when they return it has vanished. Had it been a ship they would, of course, suppose that she had foundered. But land! is it possible that a tall, substantial mass of land shall vanish on a sudden like a wreath of tobacco smoke? Had the vessel been whirled away out of sight of it by a fierce current? Had she been insensibly blown some leagues along by a stout breeze of wind? No. The man at the wheel is questioned: he rubs his eyes, stares, it is the same marvel to him as to the others. Knowing something of the sailor's character, I will venture to say that had not those men of the *Seahorse* actually seen the land go down, two-thirds of them would have gone to their graves persuaded that there had been witchcraft in the business. But put the date back three centuries, into the period of the real Ancient Mariner. He shall behold the cliff founder, if you please, and yet land at Plymouth or Erith with an imagination charged to bursting point with this obvious Satanic engorgement. I think I see him telling the story. Can his hearers, gazing upon his mahogany face, doubt that there are islands which rise and sink? and how can they rise or sink without magical possession, without being under the government of Something to direct them? The ancient mariner might, indeed, be beforehand with a solution by importing, let me say, one visible jaw of a monstrous fish that did 'suck ye londe down to ye admiration of ye beholders.' But failing some such explanation, the reason must be sought for devil-wards. The island or cliff easily becomes the abode of demons or of ocean-spirits, who use their dominions as a sort of ship, and who, when they desire a change of air or scene, alter their latitude and longitude by the easy expedient of

a submarine excursion. Such a solution could not long miss of confirmation. For presently arrives some *Elizabeth-Jonah*, or some *Ascension*, of London, or *Jesus*, of Hull, with an extraordinary and incredible report: to wit, that being about fifty leagues to the westwards of the island of Madeira, there did happen a mighty commotion in the sea; the water boiled furiously, and out of the midst of it there arose a great flame that was followed by a thick black coil of smoke which emitted a most detestable stench. This, rising, did overspread the heavens with a sable canopy, through which the sun, that had before been ardent, glowed ruefully with a most affrighting face. When the atmosphere had somewhat cleared, and the sea fallen flat again, they observed a great heap of black land floating just where the flame had been; but now, to their great joy, a small gale happening, they hastily trimmed their sails to it and departed, with hearty thanksgiving for their merciful deliverance from an hideous and diabolic spot. There would be to the full as much truth in this as in the account of the subsidence. In every century there have been submarine volcanic disturbances which have dislodged or uphove points of land, rocks, little and even big islands. Suppose what these cheery old mariners beheld was, instead of land, a body of compacted weed; or, not impossibly, a dead whale. No matter! home with the thrilling story; and let any man be pilloried who shall dare to doubt that the rock that came up is not the very identical rock that went down!

I find a singular example of the credulity that gives to the sea the choicest flavour of romance in a note to the life of Sir William Gascoigne, Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench in the reign of King Henry IV., in the first edition (1750) of the 'Biographia Britannica':

'When the said Sir Bernard Gascoign (the writer is referring to a descendant of Sir William) returned from his embassy into England, he took shipping at Dunkirk, and one of the passengers who came over with him was Mrs. Aphra Behn, the ingenious poetess. It is asserted by the writer of her life that in the course of their voyage they all saw a surprising *phænomenon*, whether formed by any rising exhalations or descending vapours shaped by the winds and irradiated by refracted lights, is not explained; but it appeared through Sir Bernard's telescopes, in a clear day at a great distance, to be or to resemble a fine, gay, floating fabrick, adorned with figures, festoons, &c. At first they suspected some art in his glasses, till at last, as it approached, they could see it

plainly without them; and the relater is so particular in the description as to assert that it appeared to be a four-squared floor of various coloured marble, having rows of fluted and twisted pillars ascending, with cupids on the top circled with vines and flowers, and streamer waving in the air. 'Tis added of this strange visionary, if not romantic or poetical, pageant—for fancy is an architect that can build castles in the clouds as well by sea as land—that it floated almost near enough for them to step out upon it; as if it would invite them to a safer landing than they sought by sailing; or pretended that the one should be as dangerous and deceitful as the other; for soon after the calm which ensued there arose such a violent storm that they were all shipwreckt, but happily in sight of land, to which by timely assistance they all got safe.'

Here, to be sure, we have a very circumstantial account of a very astonishing apparition. This would seem to have been the Blessed Island for which the saints and a noble Spanish lord made search in earlier times. It is a pity that the story comes to us in the life of so lively a romancer as Mrs. Aphra Behn; one would rather have had the grave and wary Sir Bernard's version. Certain points suggest the legend of Vanderdecken, as for example the circumstance of the storm rising and shipwreck following the approach of the island-pavilion. This fabric of fluted pillars and radiant banners must count among the mysterious disappearances. Why, when these phenomenal glories of the deep floated into full view of the mariner, why had not he the heart to straightway launch his shallop, row with anchor and cable to the magic strand and 'fix' the place, as the Yankees would say, for the satisfaction and diversion of posterity? Why should all those wonders have been in vain? If the modern seaman lack the poetic vision of the early navigator he is more generous in his detections; he desires the world to share in his own satisfaction and goes very painfully and exactly to his relation though it does but concern an iceberg or a body of vapour. The gallant Rodney, when Commodore (1752), was sent cruising in search of an island which one Captain W. Otton, of the snow[1] *St. Paul*, of London, discovered in his passage from South Carolina, about 300 leagues west of Scilly. The record in Otton's journal was extremely minute. He gave the date and hour—March 4, 1748–9, two in the afternoon—in which he made the land. He related how it bore, how he tacked, how the wind was, and what the latitude and longitude:

[1] A snow is a brig.

'This island stretches N.W. and S.E., about five leagues long and about nine miles wide. On the south side five valleys and a great number of birds. This day a ship's masts came alongside. On the south point of said island is a small marshy island.'

As though all this should not be deemed confirmatory enough of his discovery, the Captain added that he thought he saw a tent on the island, and would have gone ashore, 'but had unfortunately stove his boat.' Rodney, in company with Captain Mackenzie, a distinguished mathematician, cruised for many days, but to no purpose. The island was entirely in the eye of the captain of the snow *St. Paul.* An old saint or ancient Spanish nobleman would not have let us off so easily. The comparatively modern skipper tells of an ordinary island, prosaically but liberally invites all mariners to participation in his discovery, but humanely leaves land-going imagination and curiosity unvexed. The saint or the nobleman would probably have heard the sound of viols, perhaps an organ; the hymning of a collection of monks would have been a distinguishable music; the more erotic vision of the nobleman might have witnessed lovely forms and the seductive beckoning of foam-white hands. We should have had gilded dolphins gambolling among the breakers and been tickled by a hundred more wonderful tales than Marryat's Pasha was regaled with.

Of what material are these fantastic fabrics, real to the beholders, manufactured? Imagination is the loom, but whence comes the stuff? Yet there are many spectacles at sea which the meditative, artless fancy may easily work into creations of beauty or fear, of brilliance, melancholy, and horror. You must go back; put yourself in the place of the mariner newly arrived in an ocean-waste whose surface his keel is the first to furrow. Then think how the iceberg in the heart of the black gale will strike you: the pallid mountain-mass flashing out to the wild violet lightning dart, the vision or phantasm of a city of pinnacles, spires, minarets, with the crystal smoke of the storm whirling in clouds about its towering heights, whose ravines and scars thunder back in echoes the cannonading of the rushing surges hurling their madness upon the side of that mass of rocky faintness. Or consider the magnificence and splendour of the Northern sunset—different, indeed, from the bald glory of the sinking of the rayless tropic orb—viewed by one who, having for days stemmed towards the Pole, penetrates for the first time the wide white silence of the Greenland parallels. From those dyes of the luminary or the more amazing coruscations of the aurora borealis what shadows of

realities might not the wondering eye of the mariner evoke, observing rainbow islands reposing on seas of gold, lands of delicate effulgence and of tints too exquisitely beautiful to serve for less than the home of a race of beings whose idea and raiment must be sought in classic masterpieces in which the gods of the Greeks and the Romans are described. From the texture of the shoulders of rising clouds, from shifting veins of moonlight in the lacelike drapery of white mist, from the luminous shadow of the waterspout with its wing-shaped peak and boiling base, the new imagination far out upon the bosom of nameless waters would readily snatch material enough for those wonders of magic spaces of shore which in those times dotted the oceans of the world from the latitude of Schouten's iron headland to the height of Nova Zembla. Or, to descend to homelier stuff, omitting the mirage—perhaps the fancy's noblest opportunity on the deep—there is the ship bottom up; the inverted hulk that for months may have been washing about until she has gathered to her sodden timbers a large estate of sea-weed and marine fungi. The Telmaque Rock had undoubtedly no better foundation than this. The passengers—it was in 1786—saw green grass and moss on this rock. This settled the matter; the new island was duly logged and then charted, yet what could it prove but a capsized hull? So of the famous Ariel Rocks, which, in my humble opinion, must be put down to a dead whale or two.

'Captain T. Dickson, of the *Ariel*, when on a voyage from Liverpool to Valparaiso, December 1827, saw something of a reddish appearance about a quarter of a mile from the vessel; sounded in 47 fathoms, fine grey sand. Approaching the object, it seemed about six feet above water, when another appeared about three feet below the surface; the sea broke on both; much seaweed and many birds around; the position was determined by good mer. alt. of sun, and by lunar and chronometric observations.'[1]

H.M.S. *Beagle*, with the late Dr. Darwin on board, passed several times over the position assigned to these rocks, but found nothing—yes, her people found this: 'A heavy swell arose on the quarter, which struck our weather-quarter boat, and turned her in upon the deck . . . I thought we had indeed found the rocks, *and the huge black back of a dead whale which just then showed itself very near the vessel much increased the sensation.*'

In more ways than one may the mysterious disappearance of

[1] *South Atlantic Directory*, 1870. A long list of apocryphal islands, rocks, and shoals is given in this volume.

islands be accounted for. The sternly prosaic mariner will desire nothing in this direction that is not real, and of this as little as possible. But happily for the poetic student these disappearances stop short at the precincts of ocean literature. Enter, and the magic is all before you, perennial in its gorgeousness or terror, its sweetness of enchantment or extravagance of horror. Who would wish one of those visionary islands away? No prow built by human hands need fear them as a danger; they lie in a daylight or a midnight of their own, washed by the elfin surf of faery-land, lashed by the storms of high imagination, phantoms under phantom suns and stars, dreams of the young-eyed mariner. They are uncharted; but love has their bearings, and memory holds them fondly to their moorings. Of the sea they form the daintiest romance, and they give a colouring of poetry even to the dry and austere perpetuation of such things in these days of scientific exactness and the occasional blunders of the triumphant discoverer.

W. CLARK RUSSELL.

The Emigration of Young Children by the State.

THE importance of emigration has long been fully acknowledged, although not yet taken in hand by the State. There now seems some disposition to amend this error, as is shown by a proposal recently made, that an official department, to preside over all that concerns this subject, should be established. It can hardly be doubted that much good would result both to the mother country and to her largely unpeopled colonies. I am induced to offer a few suggestions of a somewhat novel kind, in the hope that they may lead either to modifications in the class of emigrants usually selected and sent out, or to supplementary measures in the direction indicated in this paper.

It may be well to state that I have been led to adopt these views after many years' experience of children and their requirements, gained as one of the Surgeons to the East London Hospital for Children at Shadwell, where some two hundred of the poorest class are seen and assisted every day in the week. It is, in a measure, true that a hospital experience is special, but it brings, better than any other, into relief and prominence the home surroundings of poor families, and it is largely on a knowledge of the latter that I base my thesis. Although some very suggestive facts might be adduced from the annual reports of the Registrar-General anent infant life and mortality, I will not enter into statistics, preferring for the present to discuss the principle rather than the details of the scheme.

Briefly stated, my argument is that, owing to poverty and stress of circumstances, an immense number of children are being bred and brought up under conditions which cost many their lives, or so materially deteriorate their health and constitutions as to render them unfit for the battle of life. Moreover, apart from the question of mere physical health—a matter,

nevertheless, of immense moment to an artisan—the home surroundings, even when not actually vicious, are far from being good, while, outside the home, crime and immorality of every sort bring their pernicious influence to bear upon these children just at the age when it is most detrimental. I am not in a position to say how many families have to content themselves with a single room; but I know, both from personal observation and from other sources, that there are many thousands whose home, night and day, is comprised within the limits of one small room. Even when work is comparatively plentiful, many thousands of labourers' families cannot aspire to more than two rooms. In either case, father, mother, and children can hardly live decently under such circumstances; and it is not to be wondered at that the moral instincts of city children are at a ruefully low level.

The increasing emigration which is going on, and has been for years, ought by this time to have done something to alleviate the condition of the working classes in the mother country at least, and yet the cry of the 'unemployed' is louder than ever. Can it be that the emigration of adults is a mistake? In a great proportion of cases I believe it is, and that herein lies the reason why so little effect seems to be made, notwithstanding the many thousands who have started for the colonies. Curiously enough, the efforts of the emigration agencies, both commercial and philanthropic, have been almost solely directed towards adults. I hold that the emigration of adults is wrong in principle, and chiefly because the majority of those who go out (often in response to special inducements offered) have been failures at home: they have no trade or useful craft to rely upon—that is to say, they are unskilled labourers, and know as little of the duties which belong to a colonist's life as, unfortunately, they know of home life and its obligations. On the other hand, they carry out with them the bad habits, the class prejudices, in which they have been born and bred. Their social position in the colonies, therefore, is in no way ameliorated, but rather the contrary. Hence they do not succeed; the utmost that can be expected is mere existence, with a continuation in their children of the same helplessness, hopelessness, and ignorance. Adults are proverbially slow to change their habits; they cannot throw off a mode of life in which they have been bred at home to adopt another which is strange to them; and, if they have failed at home, how much

more surely will they fail abroad, where everything is new and strange? I am well aware that individual exceptions may be taken to the above statements. A good carpenter, for instance, or a blacksmith would find steady employment, and be welcome in many places; and so, too, other skilled workmen. On the other hand, how much *more useful* would these skilled workmen be if, besides their trade, they knew something of colonial life? In this country, at least, the British workman is a strict specialist: he knows absolutely nothing of anything but his own trade, and very often he only knows part of a trade—that is to say, one branch of it. It is only in large cities where such men are likely to find the kind of work they understand; and I believe I am right in saying that there is no lack of skilled artisans in the larger cities and towns of our colonies. Emigrants are not wanted for the larger towns, but they are wanted to open up and populate the interior of the country, where to succeed a man must be enterprising and know a little of everything, of several trades besides his own, and of farming and of husbandry. I maintain that hitherto we have not taken up the subject of emigration in the best manner. It is hardly possible to find the requisite number of suitable emigrants ready made. It is not a mere matter of good intentions, of perseverance, or even of capital, but rather one of careful and deliberate training.

It appears to me that the emigration of young children, and their careful training, would meet every requirement. Their mere removal from the squalid surroundings in which they live at present; the improved health status which would follow, not of the emigrated children alone, but also of those who remain behind; the cure of the infantile dyscrasiæ (tuberculosis, rickets, scrofula, syphilis), and the consequent lowering of the present high death-rate among young children; the inculcation of habits of industry, temperance, and thrift; a suitable training in the colony where they are to live and settle, are among some of the advantages which I would claim.

I will now very briefly sketch out my plan. To be of real service, this emigration of children would have to be carried out on a large scale, and large sums of money would be required for its adequate initiation and service. It is of such a nature and scope that private enterprise and philanthropy could not adequately cope with it. The Government should undertake the scheme, with all the power and authority that the Government alone

could properly exercise, and should work it in concert with the colonial authorities. The children, either offered voluntarily or taken by the Government administration, would become the property of the State—State apprentices—and subject to it, just as soldiers are, for a certain number of years. These children would be drafted into the various colonies, and so would become acclimatised. Instead of being brought up in the back slums of towns, they would live in fresh air; instead of being demoralised by overcrowding, they would grow up like human beings; instead of want and starvation, they would have the advantage of plain and regular meals. Can it be doubted that the physique of such children would be greatly bettered?

A suitable settlement or village would be chosen by capable persons, and cottages, or huts, or shanties, with the necessary outbuildings, would have to be erected in accordance with the custom and resources of the locality. Schoolrooms, workshops, land for farming and for gardens, would also be required. The children would be divided up into families, each family having its own house and superintendent. Their education would commence at the usual age. For the great majority, reading, writing, and the simple rules of arithmetic would suffice. When old enough, the boys would be taught some trade; the girls would be taught to do housework, cook, wash, dairywork, dressmaking, and the like. All alike would be taught such things as would be useful to and in the particular colony they were living in. Of course a knowledge of agriculture would be necessary in all the colonies, and ought to be more or less universally taught. So, too, carpentering, a most essential accomplishment, and one which would prove useful to any colonist. Special aptitudes and tastes would have to be encouraged and taken up, whether intellectual or manual. I know that a certain number of children have already been sent out by private societies; but I do not hold with this. The mere sending out of children, and placing them in the families of settlers, is a poor substitute for the plan I am urging. For the most part, such children become drudges; they are taught nothing that is of any real service to them, and they are very little better off in their new homes than they were in their old ones.

Out of any given one thousand children so emigrated and trained probably some ten or twenty would grow up into first-class adults, and would make excellent heads of settlements for later batches

of children; some one hundred or more would make high-class adults, and, though they might lack the qualifications necessary for heads of settlements, would, nevertheless, make good overseers and trainers; some of the children would be good for nothing; some would die; the remainder—the rank and file—at eighteen to twenty years of age would be far better colonists in every sense of the word than any sent out promiscuously from the mother country. After a few years, the older children would be drafted further afield, and would be told off to the work involved in the foundation of new villages and in the necessary extension of the old ones; younger children would be sent out to the parent establishments. Thus a constant change would be going on. The apprenticeship completed, the emigrants would be free to do as they thought best. Many would doubtless marry, and permanently establish themselves; some would continue to work for wages at the establishments or elsewhere. As has been said, all would be taught such duties as every colonist ought to know at least something about; some would show special aptitudes for one trade or another, and might then be regularly trained to it. So with the girls. I should not urge any hard-and-fast rule of conduct, but endeavour to do justice to all. Such men and women, after a suitable training, would be as much superior to ordinary emigrant colonists as drilled soldiers are superior to the raw recruits from which they are manufactured. *Mutatis mutandis*, the results of apprenticing and training emigrants would not differ much from those of drilling our soldiers, the essential point in each case being that they are taught their duties rather than allowed to pick up their information any and everywhere. It always appears to me that those who would inculcate habits of thrift, so called, into the working classes, begin at the wrong end of life—with adults instead of with children. The poor are said to be improvident and thriftless. This is true in a sense. But what is thrift? Can a woman be thrifty, and teach thrift to her family, who has to live from hand to mouth as best she can, and on miserably insufficient means? Is not thrift a collective word, and does it not imply several distinct excellences? Can children be expected to imbibe habits of cleanliness, forethought, economy, self-respect, self-denial, content, and all the other virtues included in this word thrift, in such homes—single rooms!—as those in which so many of the poor are born, and live, and die? On the other hand, by taking children away from evil example and from evil surroundings and by training them up to be useful members of society, an

immense amount of good may be done, not to the emigrated children alone, but to the great colonies, which are so much in need of hands to develop them.

What children could be sent? Some readers will be shocked at the idea of deliberately separating children from their parents, and sending them out wholesale to the colonies as emigrants. If the homes of these children, or the home influence to which they were subjected, in any sense realised what 'home' and 'home influence' may mean to better-class children, I should be the last to urge such a plan as that now under consideration. But for children who are exposed to every sort of evil example, and whose 'home' is mostly in the London gutters, nothing but gain could result from the change. Are there parents who would voluntarily make over their children for the purposes of colonisation? I think there are many who would be only too glad, and that a great difficulty would be the selection of the most deserving and the most suitable. There are, moreover, large numbers of orphaned children who have no homes and no ties. I should object to the sending out of young criminals, though the young children of criminals would be most suitable subjects for enforced emigration, with or without their parents' consent. Indeed, if criminal offences deprived the criminals of the rights of guardianship and control over their children, a powerful weapon would be placed in the hands of the law. At present, what becomes of the children of convicts, and what chance have they in the battle of life? If there existed a colonising department, with authority to take possession of such children of criminals as they might choose to select, some few, at least, would be rescued from their otherwise hopeless condition.

One of the essentials of the plan now under consideration is that *young* children only should be selected, before untoward surroundings have had time to undermine the health, or blunt the moral sense—before evil habits have been acquired. For this purpose, children of about two to five years of age would be the most suitable, and, with a view to the greater usefulness of the scheme, children from the largest families should have preference. Nor would the advantages of such a scheme rest mainly or solely with those sent out. If this emigration were carried out on a sufficient scale, those who remain behind would have more room; there would be greater chances of finding employment, there would be less overcrowding. The parents, relieved of one or two of their

children, would be better able to do something like justice to the remainder. It will be asked whether such a scheme would not encourage ill-considered marriages. Do the present conditions discourage these marriages? Do not young men and women, neither of whom has any means, or trade, or even regular employment, marry notwithstanding, apparently indifferent to the fact that children may be born to them, for whom they can provide but the barest necessaries of life even when wages are attainable? This is one of the fruits of their own bringing up. They have never known any other conditions, and they not unnaturally lack the ambition to improve on what seems to them the natural order of things.

Would the cost of carrying out such a scheme, even on a large scale, be very great? Compared with the expense incurred by the Poor Law Boards for the relief of paupers, a small sum would suffice. But while the former progressively increases and provides only for present needs, the emigration and training of children would in time to come be a profitable undertaking to the State, both at home and in the colonies. It would soon mean, very largely, a transfer of expenditure from one department to another —that is to say, the establishment of industrial schools on a very large scale in the colonies, where population is wanted, where land and living are comparatively cheap, where fresh air is abundant, in lieu of workhouses, workhouse infirmaries, and schools on a limited scale at home, where land and living are very dear, where overcrowding exists, and where the social surroundings are such that children cannot be taught what is useful and good, without, from their tenderest years upwards, being involuntarily exposed to learn (by example) much that is debasing and bad.

As a surgeon, I cannot refrain from pointing out the immense advantages likely to accrue to the little *emigrés* from the proposed change of locality, from their overcrowded homes and streets to the bracing air of the colonies. Large numbers of these children have inherited debilities and tendencies to disease which, unless counteracted, will make them constitutionally weak throughout life. Rickets and scrofula are diseases of this kind, and are the direct outcome of long-continued unsanitary influences. These diseases are yearly becoming more and more dominant among the children of the working classes, notwithstanding the immense services rendered by the children's hospitals, now scattered through the country. Any plan which helps to segregate the population

of our manufacturing towns will have a favourable effect on these diseases, and therefore on the working classes as a body. There will be fewer deaths and less sickness among the children, and fewer weakly men and women to marry and transmit weakly tendencies to their offspring. When we bear in mind the immense importance of robust health to the artisan classes, it must be conceded that the subject is a very large one, and a very pressing one, and that it merits a graver consideration at the hands of the Legislature than it has yet received.

To recapitulate; this plan, if adequately carried out, would relieve us of some of the surplus population of our large towns, while it would supply that which is essential to the development of the colonies—emigrants; not an overflow of tradeless, helpless, vagrant adults, but young children capable of being taught to become useful citizens. It would thus develop, in the best sense and in the best manner, our colonies, thousands of square miles of which are lying unproductive for the want of hands and heads to make them actively productive. To the advantages of giving these children a good education suitable for emigrants to the colonies would be added the advantages of placing the children beyond the reach of the evil communications which corrupt good manners.

ROBERT WILLIAM PARKER.

Claude Tyack's Ordeal.

I.

CLAUDE TYACK was the tallest and handsomest man of my time at Harvard. And when I saw him walking one day with Elsie Marple through the college avenue, I felt really and truly jealous about Elsie.

Those were the dear old days before the war, and Professor Marple then taught Greek to freshmen and sophomores in Cambridge lecture-halls. Elsie was still the belle of Cambridge, and I was Elsie's favoured admirer. But that afternoon, when I met Elsie a little later, alone, by the old Law School, near the Agassiz Museum, I was half-angry with her for talking to Tyack. She blushed as I came up, and I put the wrong interpretation on her blushes. 'Elsie,' I said, for I called her even then by her Christian name, 'that fellow Claude's been here walking with you!'

She looked me full in the face with her big brown eyes, and answered softly, 'He has, Walter, and I'm very sorry for him.'

'Sorry for him!' I cried, somewhat hot in the face. 'Why sorry? What's he been doing or saying that you should be sorry for?'

I spoke roughly, I suppose. I was young, and I was angry. Elsie turned her big brown eyes upon me once more and said only, 'I'm *very* sorry for him. Poor, poor fellow! I'm very sorry.'

'Elsie,' I answered, 'you've no right to speak so about any other fellow. Tyack's been making love to you. I'm sure of that. Why did you let him? You're mine now, and I claim the whole of you.'

To my great surprise, Elsie suddenly burst into tears, and walked away without answering me anything. I was hot and uncomfortable, but I let her go. I didn't even try in any way to stop her or ask her why she should cry so strangely. I only

knew, like a foolish boy as I was, that my heart was full of wrath and resentment against Tyack.

That evening I met him again in the dining-hall—the old hall on the college square that preceded the big memorial building we of the Harvard brigade set up long afterwards in honour of the Boys who fell in the great struggle.

I looked at him angrily and spoke angrily. After hall we went out together into the cool air. Tyack was flushed and still angrier than I. 'You want to triumph over me,' he said in a fierce way, as we reached the door. 'That is mean and ungenerous. You might do better. In your place I would have more magnanimity.'

I didn't know what on earth he meant, but my hot French blood boiled up at once—the Ponsards came over with the first Huguenot refugees in the *Evangile* to New England—and I answered hastily, 'No man calls me mean for nothing. Blow follows word with men of my sort, Tyack. Insult me again, and you know what you'll get for it.'

'You are a fool and a coward,' he cried through his clenched teeth. 'No gentleman would so treat a conquered rival. Isn't it enough that you have beaten me and crushed me? Need you dance upon me and kick my corpse afterwards?'

I don't know what I answered back. I failed to understand him still, but I saw he was furious, and I only felt the angrier for that; but I struck him in the face, and I told him if he wished it to be open war, war it should be with no quarter.

I could hardly believe my eyes when he drew himself up to his full height and without uttering a word stalked haughtily off, his face purple with suppressed wrath, and his lips quivering, but self-controlled and outwardly calm in his gait and movement. I thought he must be going to challenge me—in those days duelling was not yet utterly dead even in the North—and I waited for his note with some eagerness; but no challenge ever came. I never saw Claude Tyack again till I met him in the Second Connecticut regiment, just before the battle of Chattawauga.

Late that night I went round to the Marples', trembling with excitement, and after our easy American fashion asked at the door to see Miss Elsie. Elsie came down to me alone in the dining-room; her eyes were still a little swollen with crying, but she looked even lovelier and gentler than ever. I asked her what had passed between her and Tyack, and she told me in

simple words a story that, angry as I was, sent a thrill of regret and remorse through my inmost being. Tyack had come up to her that afternoon in the elm avenue, she said, and after gently leading up to it by half-hints, whose meaning she never perceived till afterwards, had surprised her at last by asking her outright to be his wife and make him happy for ever and ever. Elsie was so breathless at this unexpected declaration that she had not even presence of mind to tell him at once of our virtual engagement; and Tyack seeing her hesitate and temporise, went on begging her in the profoundest terms of love and affection, till her woman's heart was touched with pity. 'He said he could never know another happy moment,' she whispered, 'unless I would have him, Walter; and as he said it I knew by his eyes he really meant it.'

'And what did you answer?' I asked in an agony of doubt, my heart misgiving me for my anger that evening.

'I said to him, "Oh, Mr. Tyack, I know you mean it, and if it weren't that I love Walter Ponsard with all my soul, I think out of very pity I should have to marry you.'

'You said that,' I cried, the devil within me getting the better of me for a moment.

'Yes, Walter, I said that. And Mr. Tyack gave a sort of low, suppressed, sobbing cry, like a man whose heart is thrust through, I should think, and pressed his two hands hard upon his bosom and staggered away as if I had shot him.'

'Elsie,' I said, taking her white hand in mine in a fit of remorse, 'I understand it all now. I hope to heaven we haven't, between us, sent that man Tyack to blow his brains out, or jump into the river.'

When I got back to my rooms at a little past midnight I found a note lying on my table. I took it up and read it eagerly. This is what it said:—

'WALTER PONSARD,—You have treated me brutally. No honourable man would act as you have done. Yet, for her sake, I refrain from returning the blow you gave me. But whenever my own turn comes, without hurting her, trust me, you will find you have provoked a dangerous enemy.

'CLAUDE TYACK.'

I breathed freer. Then he would not kill himself. I didn't

mind his threat of vengeance, but I should have been sorry to bear the guilt of his blood upon me.

Next morning, Tyack had gone from Cambridge, and nobody knew where he had betaken himself.

II.

Before Chattawauga, I was passing through camp, in my uniform as a sergeant in the Harvard battalion of the Third Massachusetts, when I saw an orderly coming from Holditch's regiment, with a note for the general from Colonel Holditch. He wore the grey stuff, with blue facing, of the Second Connecticut. We recognised each other at the first glance. It was Claude Tyack.

Everybody in the North volunteered in those days, and some of us who volunteered rose fast to be field officers, while others of us, equally well born and bred, remained in the ranks for months together. Tyack and I were among the residuum. He glanced at me curtly and passed on. I somehow felt, I don't know why, that the hour of his revenge could not be far distant.

I sat down in my tent that night and wrote to Elsie. It was Elsie who had wished me to volunteer. I wrote to her whenever an occasion offered. A mail was going that evening from the field. I told her all about the expected battle, but I said never a word about poor Tyack.

Just as we were turning in for the night, a United States mail was distributed to the detachment. I opened my letter from Elsie with trembling fingers. She wrote, as ever, full of fears and hopes. A little postscript ended the letter. 'I hear,' she said, 'that poor Claude Tyack is with you in Burnside's division. I shall never cease to be sorry for him. If possible, try and make your quarrel up before the battle. I couldn't bear to think he might be killed, and you unforgiven.'

I sat long with the letter in my hand. A battle is a very serious thing. If Tyack had been there in the tent that evening I think I should have taken Elsie's advice and made it all up with him. And then things would have been very different.

As I sat there musing, with the letter still in my fingers, the drum beat suddenly, and we heard the signal for forming battalion. It was the night surprise: Whelock and Bonséjour were upon us suddenly.

Everybody knows what Chattawauga was like. We fought

hard, but the circumstances were against the Harvard battalion. Though Burnside held his own in the centre, to be sure, the right wing had a bad time of it; and seventy-two of us Harvard Boys were taken prisoners. I am not writing a history of the war—I leave that to *Harper's* and the *Century*—so I shall only say, without attempting to explain it, that we were marched off at once to Bonséjour's rear, and sent by train next day to Richmond. There we remained for five months, close prisoners, without one word from home, and, what to me was ten thousand times worse, without possibility of communicating with Elsie. Elsie, no doubt, would think I was dead. That thought alone was a perpetual torture to me. Would Tyack take advantage of my absence? Elsie was mine: I knew I could trust her.

At the end of five months the other men were released on parole. They offered me the same terms, but I refused to accept them. It seemed to me a question of principle. I had pledged my word already to fight to the death for my country, and I couldn't forswear myself by making terms with rebels. We of the old New England stock took a serious view of the war and its meaning: we didn't look upon it as a vast national armed picnic party. Even for Elsie's sake, I would not consent to purchase a useless freedom by what I regarded as a public treachery. I could not have loved Elsie so much, 'loved I not honour more,' as the poet of our common country phrases it.

I was left the only prisoner in the old barracks in Clay Street, Richmond, and of course I was accordingly but little guarded. A few weeks later an opportunity occurred for me to get away. A wounded soldier from the front, straggling in by himself from the entrenchments, fainted opposite the Clay Street Barracks, and was hastily brought in and put to bed there, the hospital accommodation in the city being already more than overcrowded. In the dusk of evening I conveyed his clothes to my own room, and next day I put them on, a tattered and bloodstained Confederate uniform. Then, having shaved off my beard with a piece of hoop-iron, well sharpened against a hone, I passed out boldly before the very eyes of the lounging sentry, and made my way across the streets of the half-beleaguered city. I waited till nightfall in the rotunda of the Exchange Hotel in Franklin Street, where men sat and smoked and discussed the news; and when the lamps began to be lighted around the State Capitol, I slank off along the riverside, so as to avoid being hailed and challenged by the sentries, who held all the approaches from the direction of Washington.

In those days, I need hardly say, strong lines of earthworks were drawn around Richmond city on the north, east, and west, where Lee was defending it; and it was only along the river southward that any road was left fairly open into the country. I went by the river bank, therefore, onward and onward, till the city lights faded slowly one by one into the darkness behind me. I passed a few soldiers here and there on the road, but my Confederate uniform sufficiently protected me from any unfavourable notice. If any of them hailed me with a 'Hullo, stranger! where are you off this time of evening?' my answer was easy, 'Straight from the front. Sick leave. Just discharged from hospital in Lee's division.' Southern chivalry nodded and passed on without further parley. I was going, in fact, in the wrong direction for many questions to be asked me in passing. Everybody from the South was hurrying up to the front: a wounded soldier, straggling homeward, attracted then but little attention.

I walked on and on, always along the bank of the dark river, till I had almost reached the point where the Appomatox falls into the James. I wanted to reach the Northern lines, and to get to them I must somehow cross the river. It was pitch dark now, a moonless night in early December, and even in Virginia the water at that season was almost ice-cold in the tidal estuary. But I knew I must swim it, sooner or later, and the sooner I tried it the better were my chances. I had eaten nothing since leaving the barracks, and I should probably get nothing to eat until I reached Burnside's army. To-night, therefore, I was comparatively strong: the longer I delayed, the weaker would my muscles grow with hunger. To lie out all night on the ground in the cold is not the best way of preparing oneself for swimming a mile's width of chilly river. Besides, I was almost certain to be observed in the daytime, and shot like a dog, by the one side as a spy, or by the other as a deserter. My only chance lay in trying it by night, so I plunged in boldly just as I found myself.

I shall never forget that awful swim in the dead of night across the tidal water of the James river. The stars were shining dimly overhead through the valley mist, and by the aid of the Great Bear (for I did not know the pole-star then) I swam roughly in what I took to be a general north-eastward direction towards the shore opposite. In a hundred yards or so the southern bank became quite invisible, and I could not hope to see the northern until I had come within about the same distance of it. All the rest of the way I swam by the aid of the stars alone, so far as

guidance or compass went, and this compelled me to keep my eyes straining pretty steadily upward, and to hold my head in a most difficult and unnatural position on the surface of the water. The ice-cold stream chilled my frozen limbs, and the gloom and the silence overawed and appalled me.

I don't know how long I took swimming across; time in such circumstances cannot be measured by mere minutes. I only know it seemed to me then a whole eternity. Stroke after stroke, I swam mechanically on, each movement of my thighs coming harder and harder. My trousers impeded my movement terribly; and though I had thrown off my coat on the further bank, to leave the arms free, the boots which I had tied around my neck made swimming more difficult, and weighted my head from observing my star-guides. Still I went on and on in a dogged fashion, my limbs moving as if by clockwork. I must have been nearly three-quarters of the way across when I became aware of a new terror unexpectedly confronting me. My eyes had been fixed steadily upon the stars, so I had not noticed it before; and the noiseless working of the little screw had escaped my ears even in that ghastly silence. But, casting a hasty glance down the river sideways, I noticed all at once, with a thrill of horror, that a small steam launch, making up stream, was almost upon me. I knew immediately what she must be—the launch of the *Rapahannock*, Confederate ironclad, on her way up from Chesapeake Bay to the quays at Richmond.

I must live it out, to get back to Elsie. That was the one thought that made up my whole being, as I lay there motionless, floating on the still water, numbed with cold, and half-dead with my exertions.

I dared not move lest the launch should see, by the dancing reflection of her light on the rippled waves I made, there was something astir ahead, and should give me chase and capture me as a deserter. I floated like a log on the silent surface, and waited with upturned face and closed eyes for the launch to pass by me—or run over me.

As I floated I heard her screw draw nearer and nearer. I wondered whether I lay direct in her course. If so, no help for it; she must run me down. It was safer so than to swim away and attract attention.

I turned my eyes sideways and opened them cautiously as the noise came close. By Heavens, yes! She was heading straight for me!

At Harvard I had always been a good diver. I dived now, noiselessly and imperceptibly: it would almost be truer to say, I let myself go under without conscious movement. The water closed above my face at once. I seemed to feel something glide above me. I was dimly aware of the recoil from the screw. I shut my eyes once more, and held my breath in my full chest. Next instant I was whirled by the after-current back to the surface in the wake of the screw, and saw the white stars still shining above me.

'Something black on the water,' shouted a voice behind. 'Otter, I take it; or might be a nigger, contraband bound North. Whichever it is, I'll have a cock-shot at it, captain, anyway.'

I dived again at the word, half-dead with cold and fear; and even as I dived felt rather than heard the thud and hiss of a rifle-bullet ricochetting on the water, just at the very point where my head had rested an instant earlier.

'Otter!' the voice said again as I reached the surface, numbed and breathless, more dead than alive, and afraid to let anything but my mouth and ears rise above the black level of the water. And the steam-launch moved steadily on her way without waiting to take any further notice of me.

The danger was past once more for the moment, but I was too exhausted to swim any further, deadened in my limbs with cold as I was, and cramped with my exertions. I could only float face upward on my back, and soon became almost senseless from exposure. Every now and again, indeed, consciousness seemed to return fitfully for a moment, and I struck out in blind energy with my legs, I knew not in what direction; but for the most part I merely floated like a log down stream, allowing myself to be carried resistlessly before the sluggish current.

As day broke I revived a little. I must then have been at least three hours in the ice-cold water. I saw land within a hundred yards of me. With one despairing final effort, I know not how, I struck out with my legs like galvanised limbs, and made for it—for land and Elsie.

Would Federal pickets be guarding the shore? That was now my next anxiety. If so, my doom was sealed. They would challenge me at once, and, as I could not give the countersign, would shoot me down without a thought or a question as a spy from Richmond.

Fortunately the shore was here unguarded; below Mitchell's redoubt, indeed, attack from southward was always held impossible.

I dragged myself on land, over the muddy tidal flat, and found myself in the midst of that terrible, desolate, swampy region known as the Wilderness, the scene of the chief early conflicts in the struggle for disruption, and of the battlefields where Lee and Stonewall Jackson stood at bay like wounded tigers.

When I came to realise my actual plight I began to feel what a fool I had been to run away from Richmond. I sat there on the bank, frozen and wet, dripping from head to foot, my soaked boots hanging useless round my neck, my blood chilled, my limbs shivering, my heart almost dead, and yet with a terrible sense of fever in my cold lips, and a fierce throbbing in my aching head. I had no food, and no chance of getting any. Around me stretched that broken marshy country, alternating between pine-barrens and swampy bottoms. Scouts and pickets held the chief points everywhere: to show myself before them in my wet and ragged Confederate uniform would be to draw fire at a moment's notice. What to do I had no conception: I merely sat there, my head in my hands, and waited, and waited, and waited still, till the sun was high up in the blank-blue heavens.

I won't describe the eight days of speechless agony that followed in the Wilderness. I wandered up and down through scrub and pine-woods, not daring at first to show myself openly; and then, when hunger and fatigue at last conquered my fear, not knowing where to look for the Federal outposts. Night after night I lay upon the bare ground, in the highest and driest part of the wild pine-barrens, and saw the cold stars shining above, and heard the whip-poor-will scream shrill overhead in the thick darkness. It was an awful time: I dare not trust myself even now to recall it too vividly. If it had not been for the wild persimmon trees, indeed, I might have starved in that terrible week. But luckily the persimmons were very plentiful; and though a man can't live on them for ever with absolute comfort, they will serve to keep body and soul together somehow for a longer time than any other wild berry or fruit I know of.

At last, on the eighth morning, as I lay asleep on the ground, wearied and feverish, I felt myself rudely shaken by a rough hand, and, opening my eyes with a start, saw to my joy the Northern uniform on the three men who stood around me.

'Spy!' the sergeant said, briefly. 'Tie his hands, O'Grady. Lift him up. March him before you.'

I told them at once I was a soldier in the Harvard Battalion, escaped from Richmond; but of course they didn't and couldn't

believe me. My Confederate uniform told too false a story. However, I was far too weak to march, and the men carried me, one of them going on to get me food and brandy; for, spy or no spy, one thing was clear past all doubting, that I was so faint and ill with hunger and exposure that to make me walk would have been sheer cruelty.

'Take him to headquarters,' my captor or my rescuer said, in a short voice, as soon as I had eaten and drunk greedily the bread and meat and brandy the first man had brought up for me.

They carried me to headquarters and brought me up before three officers. The officers questioned me closely and incredulously. They would hear nothing of my being a Federal prisoner. The uniform alone was enough to condemn me. 'Take him away and search him,' they said peremptorily. The sergeant took me to a tent and searched me; and found nothing.

I knew then what would happen next. They would try me by a rude rough-and-ready court-martial, and hang me for a spy that very morning.

As I marched out from the sergeant's tent again, absolutely despondent with fatigue and fever, an officer in a major's uniform strolled casually towards us. Promotion was often quick in those days. The major, I saw at a glance, was Claude Tyack.

He stopped and gazed at me sternly for a moment. Not a muscle of his face stirred or quivered. 'Sergeant,' he said, in a cold unconcerned tone, eyeing me from head to foot, 'who's your prisoner?'

'One of Lee's spies,' the sergeant answered, carelessly. 'Took him this morning out on the Wilderness. Fourth we've taken this week anyhow. The Rebs are getting kinder desperate, I reckon.'

I looked Claude Tyack back in the face. He knew me perfectly, but never for one instant quailed or faltered. 'What will you do with him? Shoot him?' he inquired.

'String him up,' the sergeant replied, with a quiet grin.

I stood still and said nothing.

They took me back and held a short informal drumhead court-martial. It all occupied five minutes. A man's life counts for so little in war time. I was half-dead already, and never listened to it. The bitterness of death was past for me long ago. I stood bolt upright, my arms folded desperately in front, and faced Claude Tyack without ever flinching. Claude Tyack, who only looked on as a mere spectator, faced me in return, mute and white, in solemn expectation.

'Do you admit you are a spy?' the presiding officer asked me.

'No,' I replied, 'I am a Federal prisoner from Richmond, late sergeant in the Massachusetts contingent.'

'Can you get anyone to identify you?'

'In Burnside's division—yes; hundreds.'

The presiding officer smiled grimly. 'Burnside's division is a long way off now,' he said calmly. 'It moved a month ago. We can't bring men all the way from Kentucky, you know, to look at you.'

I bowed my head. It mattered little. I was too wearied out to fight for life any longer. I only thought of Elsie's misery.

Then I became aware that Claude Tyack had joined the ring a little closer, and was looking at me with fixed and rigid attention.

'Nobody nearer?' the officer asked.

I kept my eyes riveted on Tyack's. I could not appeal to him; not even for Elsie. He would not help me. I never knew till that moment I was a thought-reader; but in Tyack's face I read it all—all he was thinking as it passed through his mind: read it, and felt certain I read it correctly.

If he allowed me to be shot then and there, he would not only wipe out old scores, but would also in time marry Elsie.

I saw those very words passing rapidly through his angry mind—'If it weren't that I love Walter Ponsard with all my soul, I think, Mr. Tyack, for very pity I should have to marry you.'

She would have to marry him! He would go back, certain of my death; he would tell her all, save this one episode; he would plead hard, as he had pleaded before; and then, for pity, Elsie would marry him!

Our eyes met still; I returned his stare: tall and pale he stood confronting me: he gloated over my misfortune: we spoke never a word to one another; and yet, we two men knew perfectly in our own hearts each what the other was thinking.

There was a deadly pause. The presiding officer waited patiently. The words seemed to stick in my throat. I moistened my lips with my tongue, and wetted my larynx by swallowing. Then I said slowly, 'Nobody nearer.'

The presiding officer waited again. Clearly he was loth himself to condemn a man so weak and ill as I was. At last he cleared his throat nervously, and turned to the court with an inquiring gesture.

Then Claude Tyack took three paces forward and stood before

him. The man seemed taller and paler than ever. Great drops of sweat gathered on his brow. His lips and nostrils quivered with emotion. A frightful struggle was going on within him. The demon of revenge—just revenge, if revenge is ever just—for an undeserved insult—I recognised that—fought for mastery in his soul with right and mercy. 'I need not identify him,' he cried aloud, clasping his two hands one over the other, and talking as in a dream. 'I am not called to give evidence. He has never asked me!'

'I will never ask you,' I replied with dogged despair. 'You have found me, oh my enemy! I have wronged you bitterly. I know it, and regret it. I will ask your forgiveness, but never your mercy.'

Claude Tyack held up his hands, like a child, to his face. He was a rugged man now, though still young and handsome; but the tears rolled slowly, very slowly, one after another, down his bronzed cheeks. 'You shall have my mercy,' he answered at last with a groan, 'because you do not ask it; but never, never, never, my forgiveness. For Elsie's sake, I cannot let her lover be shot for a traitor.'

The presiding officer caught at it all as if by instinct. 'You know this man, Major Tyack?' he asked quietly.

'I know him, Colonel Sibthorpe.'

'Who is he?'

The words came as if from the depths of the grave. 'Walter Ponsard, sergeant of the Harvard battalion Third Massachusetts infantry, Burnside's division. He was missing seven months ago, after Chattawauga.'

'The name and description he gave himself. That is quite sufficient. The prisoner is discharged. Sergeant Ponsard, you shall be taken care of. Tyack, a word with you.'

III.

When I next was conscious, I found myself lying in hospital at Washington. Elsie, in a nurse's dress, was leaning over my bed. She kissed me on the forehead. 'How about Tyack?' I asked eagerly.

'Hush, hush!' she whispered, soothing my cheek with her hand. 'You mustn't talk, darling. The fever has been terrible. We never thought your life would be spared for me.'

'But Tyack!' I cried, 'I *must* hear of him! He hasn't shot

himself? His face was so terrible! I could never live if I thought I had killed him.'

'He is there,' Elsie whispered, pointing with her hand to the adjoining bed. 'Wounded the very next day in the fight at Fredericksburg. I have nursed you both. Hush, now, hush, darling!'

I said no more, but cried silently. I was glad his blood was not on my head. If he died now, he died for his country, in the only just war ever waged on this world of ours. He had had his ordeal, and passed through it like a man and a soldier.

Late that night I heard a noise and bustle at my bedside. Somebody was talking low and earnestly. I turned round on my side and listened. Elsie was standing by Tyack's bed, and holding his hand tenderly in hers. I knew why and was not surprised at her.

'Elsie, Elsie,' he said in a tremulous tone, 'press me tighter. It will not be long now. I feel it creeping over me. Is Ponsard conscious?'

I sat up in my bed with delirious strength, in spite of Elsie, and cried aloud in a clear voice, 'Tyack, I hear you.'

'Ponsard,' he said, turning his eyes and, without moving his neck, looking across at me, 'I said once I would never forgive you. I am sorry I said so. If there is anything to forgive, I forgive it freely. . . . Before I die, give me your hand, Walter!'

He had never called me Walter before. The hot tears rose fast in my eyes. Feeble and ill as I was, I sprang from my bed. Elsie clasped my left hand tight and flung the coarse coverlet loosely around me. I sat on the edge of Tyack's bed, and grasped his hand hard in my other. Elsie laid hers over both. She kissed me tenderly with her trembling lips; then she bent down and kissed the dying man too on his white forehead. His hand relaxed; his lips quivered: 'Elsie, good-bye!' he said slowly; and all was over.

Elsie flung her arms wildly around my neck. 'He saved your life, my darling,' she cried. 'Walter, I hoped I might have saved his for him.'

'It is better so, Elsie,' I answered with an effort; and then I fell back fainting beside him.

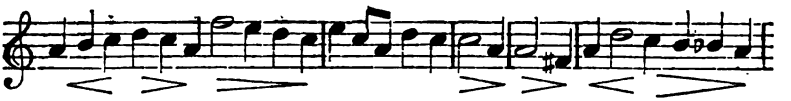
GRANT ALLEN.

On Melody in Speech.

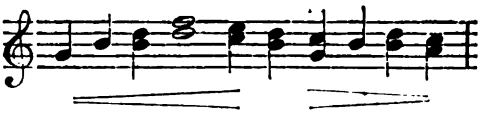
By F. Weber, Resident Organist of the German Chapel Royal, St. James's Palace.

THERE is an infinite variety of interesting and pleasing sounds in Nature's music around us, that may be noted by an attentive ear; these sounds are mostly melodious and harmonious, or in some harmonious connection, and form exact intervals and chords.

The wind in passing over houses, over trees, in gardens, fields, and forests, produces beautiful sounds of every variety, swelling from the softest to the loudest in majestic grandeur. On a stormy morning in town I heard the wind sing this melody over the roof of the house:



and on a similar night at Boulogne I copied the following passage that was wailing through the house in beautiful *crescendo* and *decrescendo*, and in many repetitions:



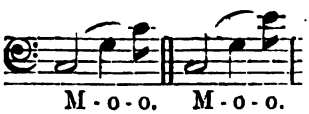
Thunder strikes us with awe by its deep rolling tones; a storm or gale[1] on land or on the ocean sends forth fierce and sublime sounds, rushing from the lowest to the highest pitch; the stately

[1] A *gale* in old Saxon and English means also a song, and with the bold sea-kings of old may also have had this meaning—a song on the ocean. *Gale* in Danish means 'to crow': *Hanen galer*, the cock crows. Other relatives, the English to *call* and the German *Kehle*, throat, the organ of song.

flow of a great river sings an everlasting deep organ-point, while the lively brook sings melodiously, and modulates like human speech.

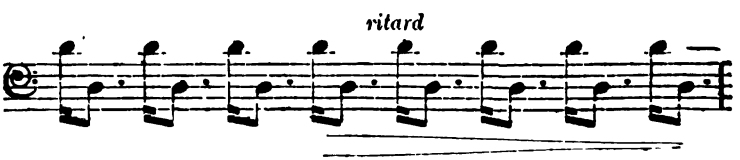
The suspended wires of an electric telegraph, when vibrated by a strong wind, produce touching and wailing sounds and chords over a whole country, like so many Æolian harps of sweet and sad sounds that may, from solemn strains and most perfect ideal harmonies, rise in an indescribable and inimitable *crescendo*, higher and higher, to moans and discords, and with the abating wind return to harmony.

All the animals on land, quadrupeds and bipeds, have their characteristic voices and calls in distinct intervals. Of our domestic animals the cow gives a perfect fifth and octave or tenth:

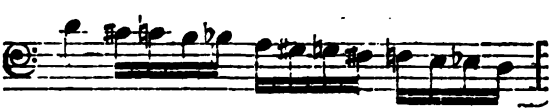


The dog barks in a fifth or fourth:

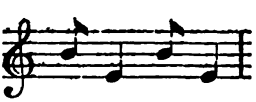
The donkey in coarse voice brays in a perfect octave:



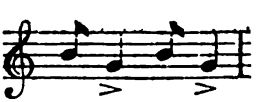
The horse neighs in a descent on the chromatic scale:



The cat in a meek mood cries:



when excited:

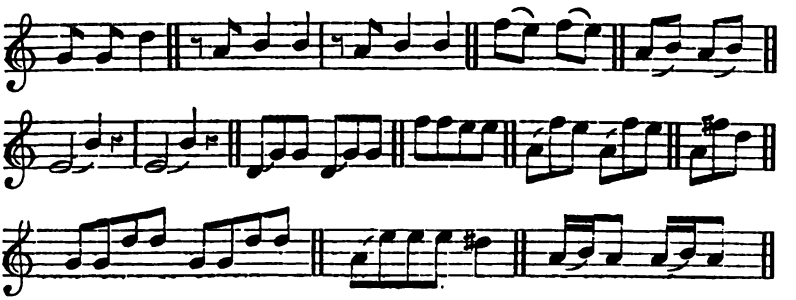


and at night on the roof or in the garden may howl over an extended compass, and at times give cries like those of an infant.

The hens, geese, and ducks in a farmyard chatter in pleasing

chorus, and proud chanticleer crows piercing solos between, in the diminished triad and seventh chord:

The birds in bushes and trees, in gardens and woods, sing most beautiful tones in exact intervals, even in melodious chords and in measured time. In passing a garden in the south-west of London on a summer's afternoon, I noted the following tones of different birds in a few minutes:



Animals of the same species vary in their musical gift, as they do in other points. Some animals are very fond of music and greatly affected by it, while others are insensible or quite averse to it; of the former the horse has already in remote antiquity been mentioned for its joy at the sound of the trumpet, as we read in the book of Job (xxxix. 25). Shakespeare also says in his 'Merchant of Venice':

> For do but note a wild and wanton herd,
> Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,
> Fetching mad bounds, bellowing, and neighing loud,
> Which is the hot condition of their blood;
> If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
> Or any air of music touch their ears,
> You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
> Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze,
> By the sweet power of music.

A touching proof of this old truth was given in the late Franco-German war, when, in the evening after the battle of Gravelotte, on the trumpet signal for the roll-call of the Life Guards more than three hundred riderless horses, some of them wounded and

hobbling on three legs, answered the well-known sounds and mustered with the remnant of their regiment.

Of the nightingale it is said, that in spring the males perch on a tree opposite the hens and sing their best one after another; whereupon the hens select their mates and fly off with them.

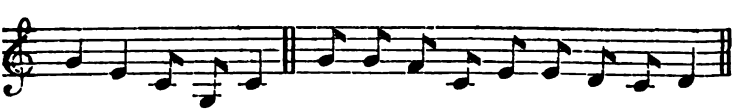
The intervals we observe most in the voices of animals are fifths, octaves, and thirds, and also fourths and sixths.

In inanimate sounding bodies, as in church bells, in the larger strings of the piano, in the Æolian harp (or wind harp), the fifth and tenth (or third in the next higher octave), commonly called *harmonics*, are very distinctly heard towards the end of the principal sound.

The *human voice* in speaking uses also these intervals foremost, but it moves also over most of the other intervals in melodious and harmonious combinations. We speak in melodies and harmonies, improvising them by the impulse of our thoughts and feelings over an extent or compass of one and a half to two octaves; as every plant grows with a certain colour, so every sentence is spoken in some melody which rises in sympathy with the sense and sentiment of the words, giving character to the whole sentence; and from the quality and accent of this musical investment, the truth and sincerity of the words may be felt, and the character of the speaker be traced.

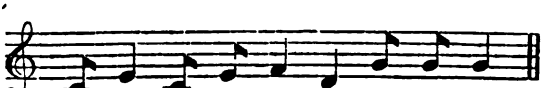
Sentences are spoken in a certain musical key, and are mostly begun on the fifth or dominant of the scale of the key-note, from which they descend in seconds or thirds or other intervals to the key-note, and, may be, down to the lower dominant:

Good morn-ing to you all. What a fine day we have now a-gain.



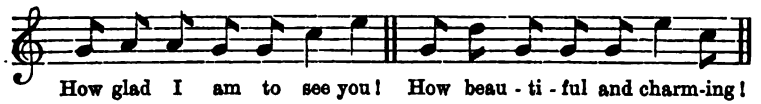
How are you to-day? Will you come and dine with me to-day

Or they begin on the key-note and move to the dominant:

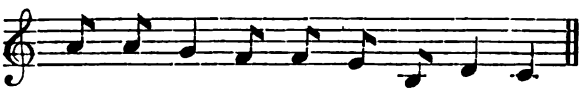


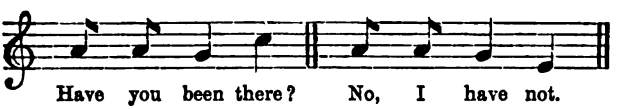
I hope you are now quite well a-gain.

Or they ascend from the dominant to the octave, and to the ninth and tenth:



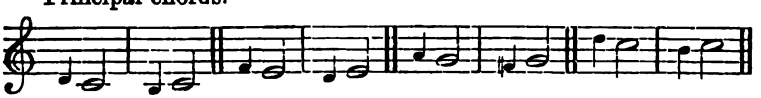
Many expressions are begun on the sixth as on a leading tone to the dominant:



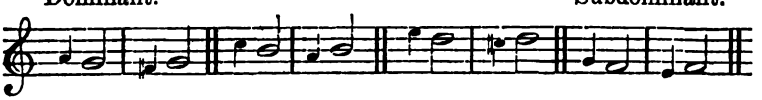


The voice moves mostly up and down in the principal scale and chord, and in their relative harmonies, and frequently dwells on introducing tones from above or below to a tone of any of these chords:

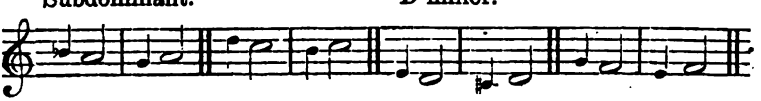
Principal chords.



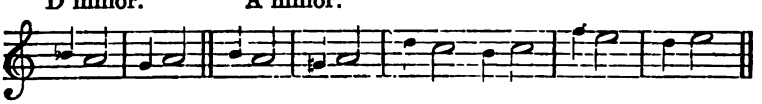
Dominant. Subdominant.



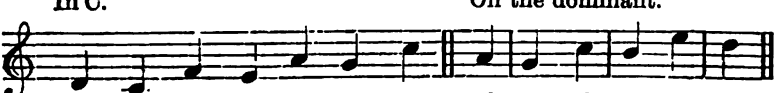
Subdominant. D minor.



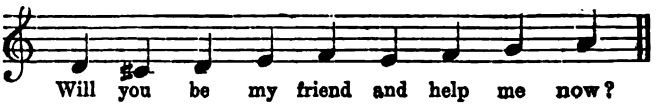
D minor. A minor.



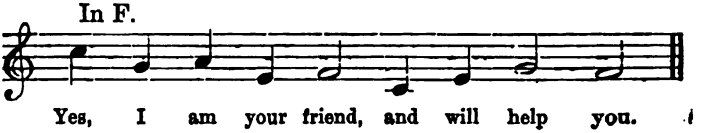
In C. On the dominant.



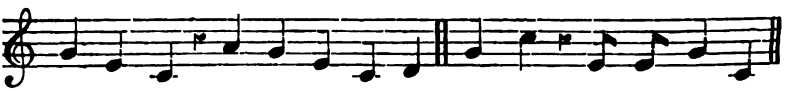
In D minor.



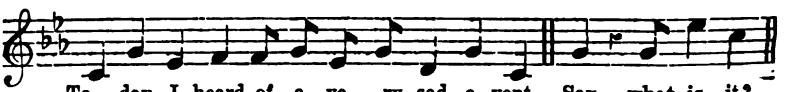
In F.



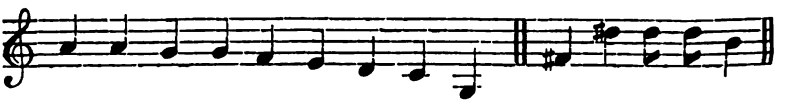
Common conversation is generally held in the major mode, and in the same key:



But when sad and pathetic it is in minor:



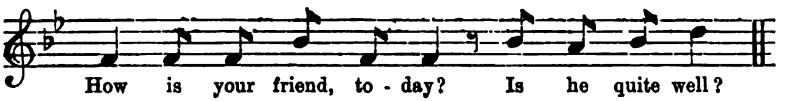
An unfriendly reply is mostly in an unrelated key:

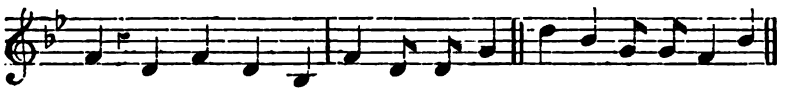


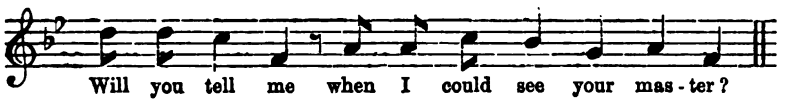
Every person has his own fundamental and favourite key in which he generally speaks, but which he often transposes higher or lower in sympathy to other voices, and when he is excited. In Divine Service at church I have heard the minister begin in his natural key, and the choir sing the response in a higher key; when the minister, possessing a musical ear, gradually rose to the tone of the choir. In one instance the minister began the Communion Service in E flat, and the choir and organ gave the response in F. The minister gradually raised his voice, and by the Fourth Commandment met the tone of the choir, wherein he continued to the end.

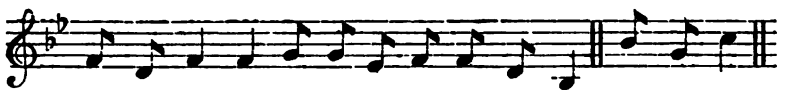
In ordinary conversation the different voices speak in the key of B flat, B, or C, persons with soprano or tenor voices moving in the upper part of the scale, and the alto and bass voices holding

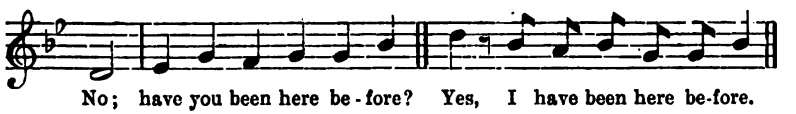
to the lower part of the same, and the replies turning often to the dominant or subdominant:

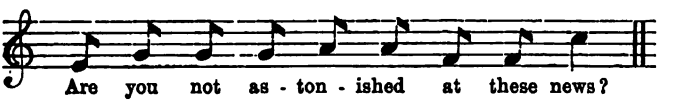


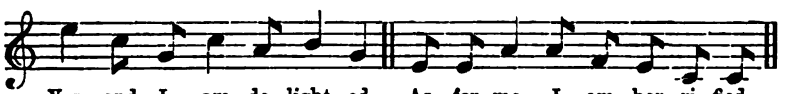


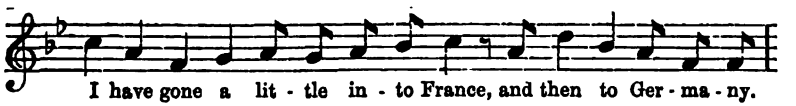


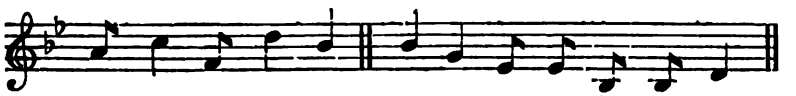




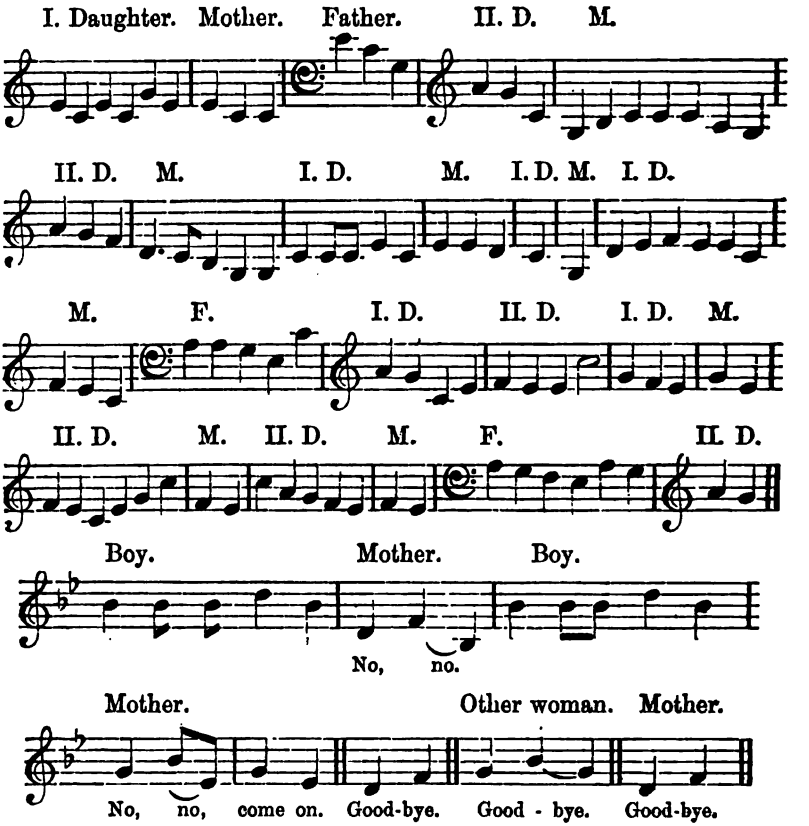






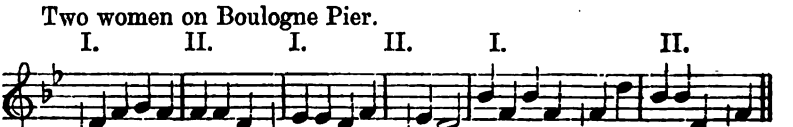


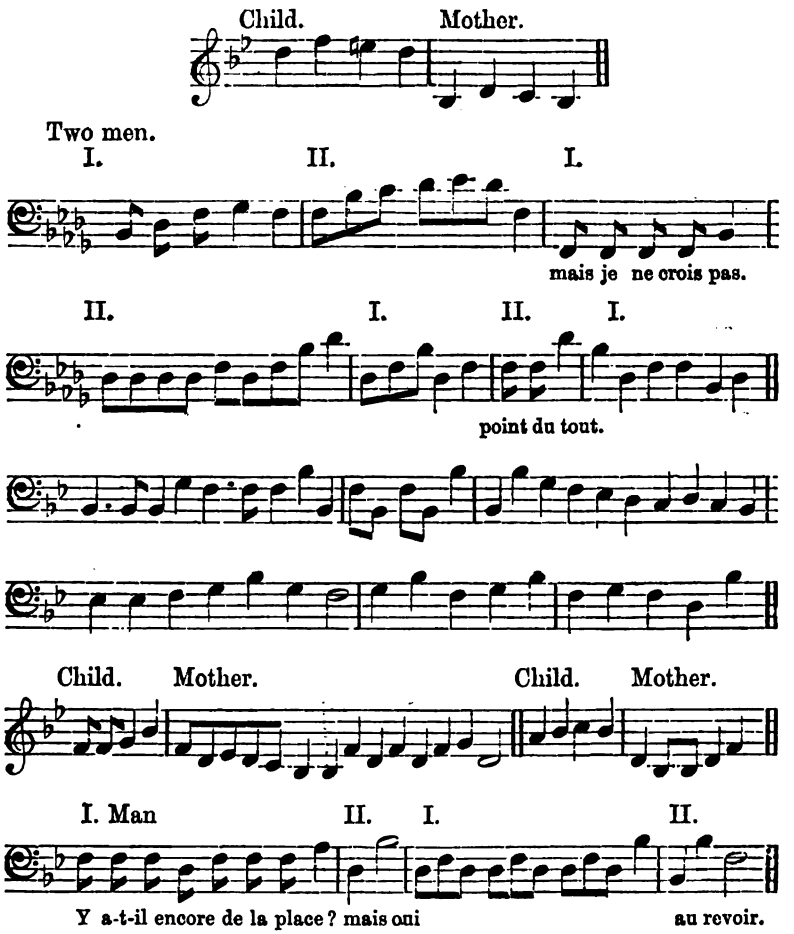
Conversation in a railway train, of father, mother, and two daughters:



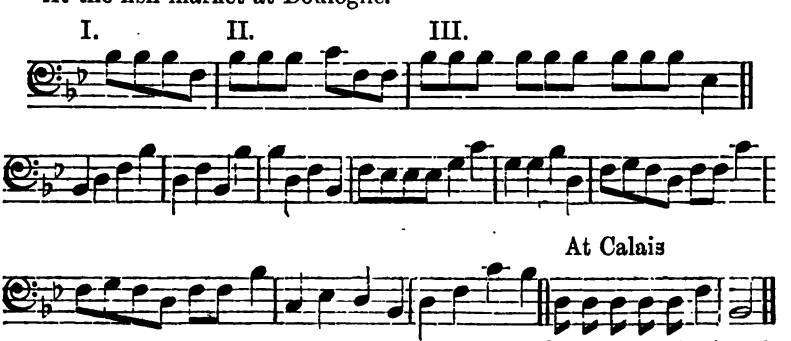
In a recent journey from Calais to Boulogne, Amiens, and Reims, I found most people there speak in the key of B flat major and minor. The large bells at the belfry at Boulogne and at the cathedral at Reims also have the low B flat, and may have been cast in that tone to be in unison with the voice of the people. Some of the conversations along the route, and the calling out of the names of railway stations, were as follows:—

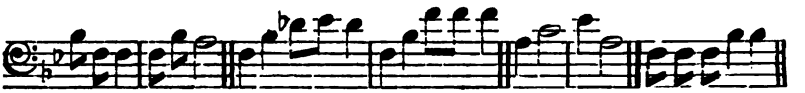
Two women on Boulogne Pier.

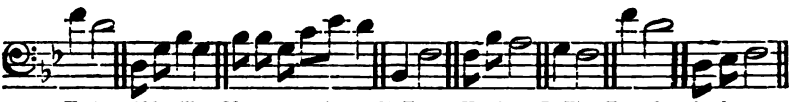


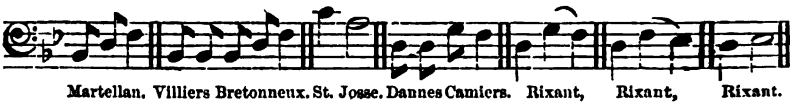


At the fish market at Boulogne.



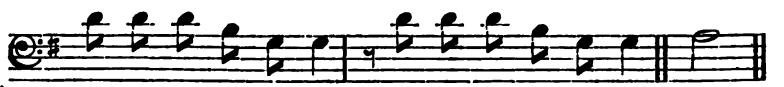


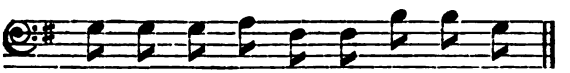




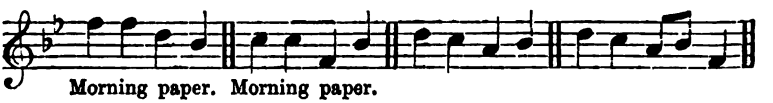
The French railway guards and conductors deserve to be complimented for their melodious calls of the names of the stations.

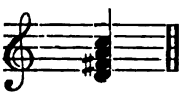
The omnibus conductors in London ordinarily call out in the key of B flat; but at busy places and hours they speak in a higher key. At Charing Cross I heard them call:

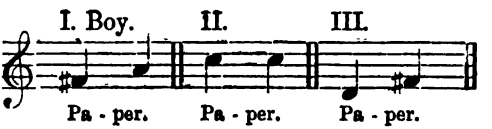




The paper boys call:

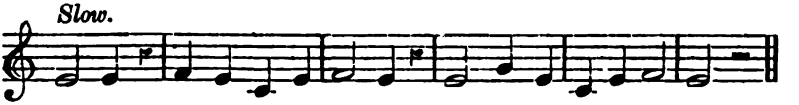


The calls of three paper boys I heard on one day at Charing Cross formed the dominant seventh chord: 



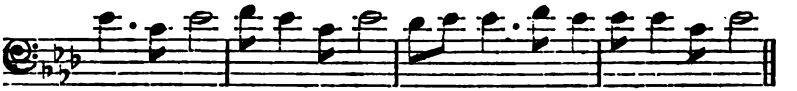
Some of the cries of vendors in the streets are quite beautiful and touching, like the following I heard and noted down of a boy in Long Acre:

Slow.



Of a man at Boulogne:

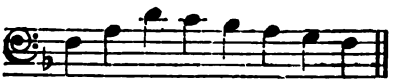
Slow.



A collection of such melodious and pleasant cries from towns in England and abroad would be most interesting in showing the musical talent and taste of the people who invent and use them.

Friendly conversations keep mostly to the key of the principal person of the circle, who at the time gives, not only the moral and social tone, but also the musical tone to all around him, and if any one of the company would speak in a different tone, he would be out of tune and out of countenance with the others. When we read by ourselves we speak in C, or in B flat, or lower still; but when we read to others, we raise our voice to the fourth or fifth of our own key, that is, to G, or F, or E flat.

We ought to study and exercise our voice in the different keys in which we may have to speak, through the whole extent of our voice, to enrich it with an easy flow of a variety of tones, so as to match our words and sentences with suitable melodious turns, to render them fervid and impressive, to touch a vibrating chord of sympathy and interest in our hearers.

When abroad I heard once a young orator speaking for nearly half an hour, with every sentence descending in these off tones of the scale  which unvarying descent of 6 5 4 3 2 1 made his well-worded speech tedious and unimpressive.

In a speech of some length the orator will save his voice by keeping more in the middle part of it, on and about his individual dominant, which part requires least strain and is the most pleasing; from where he may with good effect rise or descend in accordance with the exciting or soothing flow of his ideas and sentiments. By thus arranging the melodious part of his speech somewhat like a musical composition, and suitably contrasting the high parts of his voice with the middle and lower parts, he will engage and rivet his audience all the more to every word.

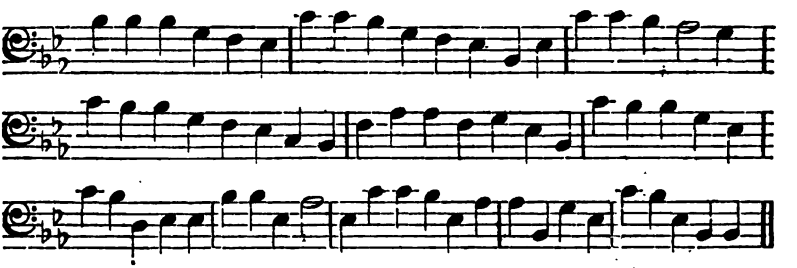
Some persons spoil the sonorousness of their voice by not letting it flow out freely and naturally, by giving it a peculiar throaty twang, by speaking too high, or by using the head voice (falsetto) too much. The natural voice, free from the chest, is most agreeable and effective in conversation and in addressing an audience; it is least fatiguing to the speaker and to the hearer, and penetrates farthest.

Spirited and impressive sermons, mostly in a major key, modulate in elevating ideas to the dominant, in soothing sentiments to the subdominant and the relative minor keys, but return and end in the principal key like a musical composition.

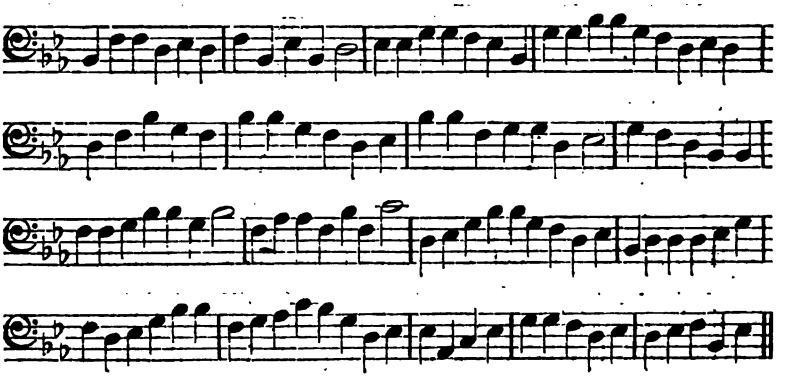
Collections of melodies in sermons and speeches of different nations would be most interesting and useful to students in oratory, be it for a dignified and becoming rendering of the great truths and sentiments in religion and humanity, or for persuasion, admonition and encouragement in secular matters.

The following melodies I have copied from a speech by an Oxford Professor, and from a sermon by an English bishop.

From an English speech (by an Oxford Professor):



From (the sermon of an English bishop) an English sermon:



Farewell to Nature.

VAIN love for Nature! How these heartaches rust
Into the soul as we return to dust!
Hope's shadow only masks our eventide,
Feigning to lead us to its brighter side,
While yet the mellowing skies that wondrous grow,
Seem left in waiting for the dead below.
But those tranced sunsets,—little they avail,
None travel hence in their alluring trail;
All is a dream, an ancient dream, the same
From the first mortal to the last that came.
Yet could we but for once our eyes unclose
When through the distant days the pageant goes!
Familiar vision, and so soon to be
Entombed within the dead eternity.

Doth Nature know our dream, or is the mind
A passing breath her beauty leaves behind?
Ah! not for this our grateful souls have wrought
Around her sphere a universe of thought.
'Tis she inspires our dreams, but no reply
Vouchsafes the loving hearts that for her die,
Who only pray, when life's surprise is o'er,
They may partake a glimpse of her once more.
Is it too late? She sees not to the end;
What she hath done she never can amend;
Yet once by us beloved, once only known,
She seems from all the past to be our own.

Last wish of age! How sweet one glance would be
Even from the sod the olden haunts to see;
To watch the long-drawn wavelets as they reach
The silent plains of the deserted beach;

To look where light once was, if but to know
Of its faint struggle through the winnowed snow.
Ah! whence this dream that like the cuckoo-guest
Pleads in such winning accents for a nest,
And with its cloud-note ever on us calls,
And though it passes the fond heart enthralls?

Little it seems, this wish, when oft our sight
Tires of the world, yet what a fresh delight
Were it sometimes in death those scenes to view,
The olden scenes that to our youth were new,
To linger o'er a sound whose murmurs swell
Upon the heart,—the tinkling village bell,—
To find that all was safe, all gliding on
In beauty's leisure ways though we were gone;
To see brave Nature in her perilous scheme
Advance without our help, without our dream.
At least 'twould hold ajar death's open door
To think our love was honoured evermore,—
In dying, on the forward thought to dwell
That it was not our very last farewell.

Could hope unveil and not its mystic fire
Be lost among the embers of desire!
Ill though desponding hearts their burden bear,
Is not the soul the master of despair?
Is this great life, hard won, achieved in vain,
Is good once found to never be again?
Ask of the worlds if they their path forget,
Ask hope that never ends, its time to set.
One deep desire throughout all being cries
And this is hope, our future in disguise.
O living lamp, O Hope, the only Seer;
Of Nature's after-time the pioneer,
Keep in advance across our starless way,
Be the new morrow of our orphan day!

THOS. GORDON HAKE.

Marrying and Giving in Marriage.

By Mrs. Molesworth,
Author of 'Hathercourt Rectory,' 'Carrots,' &c.

CHAPTER VIII.

THEY were expecting her. All three ladies rose from their seats when Aveline entered, and came forward eagerly to meet her. For a moment or two she was kissed—on both cheeks—and caressed and murmured over to such an extent that she scarcely knew where she was, and the little demonstration served one good purpose, for when it was over she was flushed and excited, so that even Madame de Boncœur's keen old eyes were deceived.

'She is looking brilliant, the dear child,' exclaimed Modeste's grandmother, joyfully. For, truth to tell, since the announcement of Miss Verney's engagement, the old lady had had misgivings on the subject, though loyalty to Lady Christina had prevented her expressing them. 'I must kiss you again, my dear,' and so she did. 'To think that a whole week should have passed since we heard the news, and that only now do we see you to wish you joy.'

'I—I wanted very much to see you and dear Modeste,' said Aveline, 'but somehow, ever since the day you called, when I was so sorry to miss you, I seem to have been so busy.'

'Naturally; that is easily understood,' said the old lady. 'Now, my children, I am sure you will like to be by yourselves for a little. Take your friend to your own quarters, Modeste, but bring her back to say a word to us on her way. You can stay an hour or two, dear Aveline?'

'Till five; then Leo and her governess will call for me,' replied Miss Verney, as she went away with Mademoiselle de Villers.

'I am glad to see that child looking well,' said Madame de

Boncœur to her daughter, when they were left alone. 'I had—ah, well! perhaps I should not say it. I did not feel sure of this affair being for her happiness. And even now, I confess, I scarcely understand it. But tastes differ—fortunately.'

Madame de Villers looked up from her embroidery frame, questioningly.

'Do you think she *is* looking well?' she said in her slow, impassive way. 'She was flushed and somewhat agitated at first, but afterwards, when the colour faded, I thought her pale and anxious-looking. Still, there *can* be no reason for it; I don't think I quite understand your misgivings, mother.'

'It is very easy to understand—you should not force one to say things in a disagreeably definite way, Alice; it does not sound nice,' said the old lady, testily. 'Of course I *meant* that I doubted if the child herself wishes this marriage. Christina is a good woman, but—these huge families: they make some women practical to the verge of becoming unscrupulous.'

Madame de Villers looked up in surprise.

'I thought——' she began.

'Never mind what you thought,' exclaimed her mother; '*I* think Christina Verney at heart as worldly as any French mother of the old days that ever lived. Ah, bah! Never mind—I tire myself for nothing. But tell me, you don't think that poor child looking well?'

'No,' replied the younger lady, 'I do not.'

'We must see what Modeste says,' murmured Madame de Boncœur.

Modeste, poor girl, was feeling at that moment very much at a loss what to say or what to think. She had met Aveline effusively, expecting to find her so happy in her new prospects that it would be easy to conceal her own want of sympathy in their attractiveness. For Mr. Ayrton had *not*, her readiness to see everything English in the most favourable light notwithstanding, agreeably impressed Mademoiselle de Villers; nor, which in her eyes was much more important, had he won the golden opinion of her *fiancé*, Maurice de Bois-Hubert.

'Ah, indeed!' had been that young gentleman's commentary on the news. 'I am disappointed. I had thought your pretty friend's little drama was to have a different ending. What, then, has become of the great handsome Englishman who talked French so well? Gone? Ah, that is a pity. Well, well, tastes differ,

fortunately.' The same reflection with which Madame de Boncœur was fain to console herself.

'I am so glad to see you again at last, dear Aveline,' began Modeste, gently stroking her friend's hand. 'I was in despair at missing you the day we called. You see, we should be more friends than ever now—now that you too are *fiancée*, dear Aveline.'

'Yes,' Aveline replied, smiling faintly, 'and we must make the most of our time, Modeste, for your marriage will be coming so soon. Oh, Modeste,' she exclaimed with a complete and sudden change of tone, 'don't you *hate* the thought of it?'

Mademoiselle de Villers opened wide her large dark eyes and stared at Aveline in consternation, almost approaching horror. She thought that her friend must be going out of her mind.

'Aveline!' she exclaimed.

'Well,' said Miss Verney, feverishly, 'why do you stare at me like that, Modeste? They say—I have often heard people say—that girls do hate the idea when it comes near.'

'Every girl must be sorry to leave her home and her old life, just as one is sorry when the spring goes, even though one knows the summer is coming,' said Modeste. 'But that is very different from hating the thought of one's new life, surely? Oh, no—if I felt so, I would not marry.'

Aveline got up from her seat and walked impatiently to the window. She stood there for a moment gazing out vacantly, then she turned and came slowly back to Modeste.

'You're as bad as Leo,' she said with a quivering smile which was next-door neighbour to tears. 'I had thought—I had hoped—I didn't expect you to think about falling in love and all that kind of thing——'

Modeste's face flushed.

'You don't, I hope, think I would marry if I hated the thought of it, as you say. I don't understand you, Aveline. Why did you accept this—Monsieur Ayrton, if you hate him?'

Aveline sat down and leant her head back wearily.

'I don't *hate* him,' she said; 'that's what you won't understand. If I hated him I would not marry him. I daresay—I suppose—it will all turn out right enough.'

'But why marry him if there is any doubt about it?' persisted Mademoiselle de Villers.

'Modeste,' said Aveline, 'I think you might understand without forcing me to say it. I think it is my duty to marry Mr. Ayrton. At one time I thought it impossible, but now—no,

I don't hate him,' with, again, a wintry smile. 'He has behaved well and disinterestedly to me. He has been straightforward and in earnest from the first'; and here the girl's pale face grew red, 'and—I don't expect much from life for myself. Surely, Modeste, it must be right to think of others? To see one wrinkle the less on papa's face, to know that I can make things easier for Chris and Arthur and for Leo, to know that dear Leo will be free to marry happily, with my help perhaps—ah! think of the joy and delight of that, Modeste. I cannot be doing wrong in thinking of others more than of myself.'

Modeste's face expressed complete bewilderment. She took refuge for the moment in a question.

'And your mother?' she said. 'You do not mention her, Aveline. Is it to please her too? Can you not speak openly to her and ask her advice?'

Aveline's pleading face grew hard.

'No,' she said; 'mamma is the last person in the world I could speak openly to about myself. Pleased? Yes, it is to be hoped she is pleased. Ah, but how little she understands!' and the hard look intensified. Then with a sudden effort she seemed to rouse herself. 'You do not answer me, Modeste,' she said. 'Tell me, it cannot be wrong to forget oneself for others. *Your* religion teaches this more than any, surely?'

Modeste's lips opened as if to speak, then closed again.

'I don't know what to say, nor how to answer you,' she said at last. 'You put things in a way that puzzles me altogether. There must be wrong and right about it somewhere, if one could find it out.'

The words struck Aveline.

'I suppose it is always wrong to do wrong,' she said. 'It would be wrong to marry a bad man because he was rich and your family wished it. But Mr. Ayrton isn't a bad man; he's only—I don't know how to say it—rough; perhaps even a little coarse.'

Modeste gave a slight shiver.

'Oh, Aveline!' she said.

'He may improve,' Miss Verney went on, calmly. 'I am *very* fond of his father and mother, Modeste.'

'Yes?' said Mademoiselle de Villers, more cordially than she had yet spoken. 'I am glad of that.'

'Then you will give me a little comfort, won't you?' said Aveline. 'I have been looking forward to getting it from you. You are almost like a married woman now, you see, and that

makes you seem older. Tell me, you don't think me wrong, dear Modeste.'

'If—if you don't care for any one else more than for Monsieur Ayrton, I suppose——' Modeste began, hesitatingly.

But Aveline interrupted her.

'*That* even won't always hold water,' she said lightly. 'You wouldn't tell a child who was crying for the moon that he must go on crying for it. You would rather advise him to play with his humming-top and forget all about the moon.'

Modeste's sensible little face puckered up with perplexity.

'You bewilder me, Aveline,' she said. 'I have never thought of things like that—they don't come in our way.'

'So much the happier for you,' interposed Miss Verney.

'I wish you could talk to bonne maman,' cried Modeste.

'I couldn't,' Aveline replied, 'and it would be no use now. The die is cast. But now, Modeste,' she went on in a different tone, 'let us talk of other things. Won't you tell me about your *trousseau* a little?'

Modeste was nothing loth to do so, and in the interest of the topic her anxiety about her friend fell a little into the background.

But it revived again that evening when, alone with her mother and grandmother, the latter made some little enquiry about Aveline.

'You found her in good spirits—your young friend—of course as all is now arranged?' said the old lady.

Modeste hesitated.

'Bonne maman,' she said, with a little sigh; 'after all, though I love Aveline, I am not sure that I understand English girls. I am afraid about Aveline, bonne maman.'

'Tell me, my child,' said the old lady, gently. And Modeste tried to tell.

The two elder ladies glanced at each other.

'Ah!' said Madame de Villers under her breath. She was too kind-hearted not to feel sorry for her daughter's friend, yet with this was mingled a curious sensation of triumph over her mother's *Anglomanie*. 'How these English do mismanage their affairs!' she half whispered.

Madame de Boncœur looked very grave.

'Don't make yourself unhappy about it, my child,' she said, gently stroking her granddaughter's hand.

'But, bonne maman,' whispered Modeste, the tears creeping

into her eyes, 'she allows he is rough and even a little coarse. Suppose he were to turn out really a brute—to be cruel to her—to ill-use her?'

'Calm yourself, Modeste. Her parents will have seen to *that*—her father is not the man to allow her to run such a risk—nor her mother. Christina is worldly, but she would not absolutely immolate her child?'

'I could not take it upon myself to say,' replied Madame de Villers, to whom this question seemed to be addressed.

The old lady groaned.

'Alice,' she exclaimed, 'you horrify me.'

Madame de Villers raised her eyebrows.

'Dear mamma,' she said mildly, 'don't put it upon *me*. I only repeat like Modeste that I don't understand these English folk and their ways.'

Madame de Boncœur looked so distressed that her granddaughter, reversing the positions of a few moments before, tried to console her.

'Bonne maman,' she said softly, 'Aveline herself said if he were a *bad* man she would never marry him. If it really should be so, let us hope she will find it out in time. She says he is rough and coarse—and indeed we have seen it for ourselves. That sort of man is probably not clever—he may let it be seen if he is really a—a—'

'A brute,' suggested Madame de Boncœur, laughing, her elastic spirits reasserting themselves. 'Bravo, my little Modeste, I did not think you were already so wise. Let us hope, if it be so, that your predictions may come true. He drinks probably—that is not a defect too easy to hide.'

'Mamma!' said Madame de Villers, with a glance in her daughter's direction. But the old lady gave a slight gesture of indifference. Modeste was not a child now, she was all but a married woman, she must hear such things spoken of now and then. But the girl herself was not so unimpressionable.

'How dreadful!' she exclaimed, with dilated eyes. 'Oh, bonne maman, supposing he is as bad as that, and that she does *not* find it out! Oh, poor Aveline!'

'Let us hope for the best,' said Madame de Villers, placidly. 'I have been told that among English people a broken engagement is not thought so grave an affair—so much the better in this case, perhaps.'

And with this she dismissed from her mind all anxiety on the

subject of her daughter's friend. But not so her old mother and Modeste.

When Aveline got home that afternoon and went into her own room she found Leo waiting for her. The sisters had of late been much less together than formerly. Aveline's new position had altered many things—among others, from it had resulted the first coldness that had ever existed between herself and her darling Leo.

'And to think,' thought the elder sister to herself, sharply conscious of the irony of fate, 'that it is greatly for her sake that I am doing it!'

To-day Leo struck her as looking brighter and more 'like herself,' as the saying is, and immediately the elder sister's heart grew lighter.

'What have you been about, Leo?' she said cheerfully. 'You look quite excited about something or other.'

'Oh, yes, Avé. I've been waiting to catch you before you dress for dinner. Look what has come for me from Spain—isn't it pretty?—just what I wanted, and with such a delicious scent. Isn't it good of him not to have forgotten?'

She held out as she spoke a rosary carved in sweet-scented wood, such as one sees in all Spanish or southern towns. It was of no great value nor rarity, but it pleased Leo thoroughly.

Aveline gazed at it but half comprehending.

'From Spain?' she repeated.

'Yes, of course,' said Leo, impatiently. 'Don't you remember—oh, perhaps, you didn't hear—that Mr. Hereward promised to send me a Spanish rosary as soon as he got there? It was one day when we were looking at those shabby little ones outside one of the churches,' Leo went on, with a tone of supreme contempt for the formerly-coveted treasures, 'and I hadn't money enough to buy one. It is from him, I know, for he put one of his cards in with his address. I must write to thank him, mustn't I, Avé?'

'I suppose so. Yes, of course. You'd better ask mamma. Have you shown it to her?' asked Aveline.

'Yes, but she scarcely noticed it. She just said, "Oh, yes, very nice." And when I said, "May I write to thank him?" she said, "Yes, if you like." She was busy looking at a lot of lace with Lady Ayrton. But I thought I'd ask *you* about writing,' and Leo fixed her very observant orbs full on her sister's face.

It grew faintly pinker under the scrutiny.

'Why should I object to your writing?' she said coldly.

'I didn't suppose you would. I thought you would tell me, perhaps, what to say. Shall I send any message from you?'

'My kind regards, if you like. You know what to say as well as I do; but you can show me the letter when it is ready, and I will see if it's all right. I must dress now, or I shall be late for dinner.'

'Mayn't I stay with you while you dress, Avé?' asked Leo. Of late she had rather avoided this time together.

'If you like, dear,' said Aveline, but her voice sounded tired.

'What are you going to put on? Your blue?' said Leo, in some surprise. 'Oh, yes, I remember. Mamma said *they* were coming after dinner. Well, *I* shan't have to come in, anyhow.'

'Leo,' said Aveline, suddenly facing round upon her sister, 'I wish you would not speak that way. You are making things far harder for me than they need be, and I don't deserve it of you. You don't know—you can't understand—' she went on, with a catch almost like a sob in her voice, but she choked it down. 'Leo, do come in to the drawing-room this evening—you know mamma is pleased now for you to come whenever there is any one—and try to be nice to Lady Ayrton, and—and to her son.'

Leo's face remained somewhat hard and unbending.

'I don't mind Lady Ayrton,' she said. 'She's kind and good enough, except—well, she couldn't very well be anything else to us—to *you*, Aveline. Just think what she's getting. But about Mr. Ayrton. I detest him, Avé. I detest him more and more every time I see him. I don't want to make things easier for you—the harder they are the better, if only it would make you give up this horrible marriage.'

'Leo,' exclaimed Aveline, almost in amazement—the child had never before spoken out her mind quite so plainly—'Leo, I have given my word.'

'Does that mean that you'd give it up if you could?' said Leo, her eyes gleaming.

'No,' said her sister, calmly. 'Nothing is altered. I have just the same reasons for agreeing to marry Mr. Ayrton that I had when I first accepted him.'

Leo's face fell again.

'You've been with Modeste and her grandmother to-day,' she began again. 'What did they say? What do they think about it?'

'What do you mean, Leo?' said Aveline, impatiently. 'You don't suppose I go running about asking everybody's opinion about what I am going to do.'

There was evasion in her reply, and evasion was what Aveline seldom condescended to. She felt ashamed of it, even while she thought it justified. She was ashamed, too, that Leonora should perceive it.

'I did not say "everybody,"' replied the girl quietly. 'Modeste is your best friend here. You might have said things to her that you wouldn't say to "everybody," certainly.'

'Well, then,' said Aveline, 'I can't tell you what she said, or what I said to her.'

A shadow of satisfaction stole over Leo's face.

'They don't like it, and they have told her so,' she said to herself, 'and I daresay that's what's made her so cross.'

She turned to leave the room without speaking.

'Leo,' Aveline called after her, 'you will come into the drawing-room this evening?'

'I'll see,' Leo replied. 'I want to get my letter written first, and I shall take some time about it. I want to do it very nicely, *of course*.'

And with this parting thrust she departed.

Aveline sat for a moment or two gazing before her.

'Modeste, and now Leo,' she said. 'There seems no rest for the soles of my feet anywhere. I don't pity people who are martyrs if all their friends stay beside them supporting and praising them for what they are doing.' She gave a bitter little laugh. 'It's too bad to have done it, to have made up my mind it was right, and not to get any credit for it—except indeed from mamma, and her approval I don't want. She understands my real motives less than any one. Lady Ayrton, of course, is ready to praise me to any extent if I would let her, poor dear,' and a softened look stole over Aveline's face.

'I understand *her* motives, and I can't blame her. But altogether, this going over it all and questioning me, as Modeste and Leo do, is almost more than I can bear. I wish it could all be over sooner. I wish I could be married next week.' And, 'I wonder,' she allowed the thought to rest for a moment in her mind, 'I wonder if *he* knows I am going to be married. Not that he would care. If he gave a thought to it he would probably despise me for it and credit me with the lowest motives. But he could not despise me much more than he has done already, according to what mamma says.'

And all softness left Aveline's face at this reflection.

CHAPTER IX.

AVELINE was glad when dinner was over, for she and her father and mother were dining alone, and she felt less able than heretofore to meet the shrewd kindly glances Mr. Verney from time to time directed towards her from under his shaggy eyebrows, or, still worse, to reply with any sort of cordiality to her mother's rhapsodies about the lace in which she and Lady Ayrton had been investing.

'My purchases were very small, of course,' Lady Christina ran on, 'though I confess I never did feel so tempted to be extravagant in my life. It isn't every day one has a daughter going to be married.' She glanced brightly at her two companions in turn, but on neither husband's nor daughter's face was any answering smile to be detected. She was getting used to this kind of thing, however, and dismissed all annoyance with a mental shrug of the shoulders. '*Some* day, perhaps, when Aveline has daughters of her own to marry, she will do me justice,' she said to herself. And, with this consolatory reflection, she babbled on again—if a Lady Christina can ever be said to babble—in her softest tones about the Brussels and the Mechlin and all the rest of it.

'There were some flounces which positively made my mouth water; they would be so lovely, arranged in the new way, for your wedding-dress, Avé'—her daughter had never been anything less formal than Aveline till the new state of things. 'But your aunt Barbara has always promised you her old lace for *that*, and of course there is something eminently respectable in old lace. And I can tell you—are you listening, Aveline?—whether you have your wedding-dress trimmed with them or not, I don't suppose it will matter to you in the end that *I* could not afford the flounces for you. For Sophia bought them, and looked very mysterious over it, and she chose those *I* thought the prettiest.'

Lady Christina nodded her head with great satisfaction. Aveline smiled faintly; something just then made her feel sorry for her mother.

'Lady Ayrton is exceedingly kind; very, very kind,' said the girl.

Mr. Verney glanced up.

'Yes,' he said, 'she is both kind and generous. It is not often that very rich people are so generous.'

Lady Christina beamed with satisfaction, but Aveline said nothing. She had detected a certain undertone in her father's voice.

In the drawing-room, a few minutes later, Leonora, in correct white muslin and with neatly arranged hair, made her appearance: Aveline glanced at her with approval.

'She has done it to please me, the dear,' she reflected, and she welcomed Leo with a bright smile, which brought the child across the room.

'Avé,' she whispered, 'can you look at my letter before they come? I have it here all ready, and mamma is busy just now. Just come into the little drawing-room a moment.'

Aveline followed her sister. The letter was irreproachable. She read it carefully, and was just putting it back into the envelope when sounds in the next room announced the guests' arrival.

'Quick, Avé,' said Leo. But Aveline, always deliberate in her movements, saw no reason to hurry. A moment later she regretted she had not done so.

Wilfred Ayrton, his face adorned with a foolish smile and even redder than usual, with a something indescribable about his whole bearing and appearance, which the two girls felt rather than saw, came slouching unsteadily into the room.

'What're you after, in here by yourselves, young women?' he began. 'Up to mischief, no doubt. Writing billy-doos, eh? Can't stand that sort of thing, you know.'

His voice was not exactly thick, or perhaps, as it was at no time clear, not any startling difference was perceptible, but the tone and the words were sufficient. Aveline looked up haughtily.

'Mr. Ayrton!' she exclaimed.

He was too stupid to understand her manner at once. He burst into a coarse laugh, and putting out his hand caught hold of the letter in Aveline's fingers. In her amazement she made no effort to retain it, nor did she recover her presence of mind till he had drawn it from the envelope and was holding it up to read. And even then all the girl did was to sink back on her chair with a look of almost wild appeal to her younger sister.

'Leo,' she whispered, 'I can't struggle with him. What can we do?'

Mr. Ayrton meanwhile had made himself master of the first sentence.

'"Dear Mr. Hev—Hew—"' he stammered, '"dear Mr. *Hereward.*" Oh, indeed, that's it, is it? You're writin' to *that* fellow,

are you? I say, Aveline, I'm not goin' to stand that kind of thing, you know. I must see what it's all about, any way. "I —I thank you very much indeed for your lovely present." Has the fellow been sending you presents?' said Mr. Ayrton, frowning upon Aveline, his face so distorted and inflamed with temper as to seem positively repulsive, his voice clearer for the moment with the force of his excitement. 'Answer me at once, or I—I——' and he stammered and spluttered in the vain endeavour to find his words. Aveline and Leonora grew pale with fear.

'Run, Leo, run for papa,' whispered the elder girl, half wildly, and Leonora flew. But at the door between the two rooms she knocked against Lady Ayrton, who, after a word of greeting to her hostess, had thought it advisable to follow her son, and that not without considerable trepidation and misgiving.

'Not so fast, my dear—not quite so fast, please,' said the poor lady, with nervous good-nature; 'why, where are you off to, Leo? Is anything the matter?' as she caught sight of Leonora's face.

'It's Mr. Ayrton. He's been so rude to Avé—and he is so queer. I think he's going out of his mind. I'm going to fetch papa,' Leo replied, in her agitation quite forgetting to whom she was speaking.

Lady Ayrton caught her by the arm.

'My child, I beg you to do nothing of the kind. I will speak to Wilfred. He is hot-tempered, you know. I understand him. Run in to your mother. I will send Aveline to you. But don't say anything to your father, I beseech you. Men, you know, are different. It might lead to a quarrel if Wilfred has lost his temper. Your father is still in the dining-room. Leo dear, I entreat you!'

Mystified, but impressed, Leo gave in.

Lady Ayrton hurried up to the corner, where Aveline, still pale and trembling, sat watching her *fiancé* as he glared at the paper in his hand.

'Wilfred,' said his mother, in a low voice, but more sternly than Aveline could have believed her capable of speaking, 'what is all this?

Mr. Ayrton started, and the look on his face as he turned to his mother was one of fear.

'That's—that's just exac'ly what I'd like to know,' he said. 'A letter to that—that fellow—I can't stan' that sort o' thing, you know.'

'Give me the letter, Lady Ayrton, please,' said Aveline. 'It

is poor little Leo's,' she added, when she at last got it into her hand. 'But he—he has been so—he frightened us so.'

'It will be all right, my love—you will see,' said the poor mother, forcing herself to speak cheerfully. 'Wilfred takes up things wrongly, and he is hasty,' she added, in a lower voice. 'Leave him to me. I wished him not to come to-night. He—he was put out before we left home. Just leave him to me, dear. Will you go into the other room?'

'No,' said Aveline, 'I will go to my own room. Say good-night to mamma for me—say anything you like;' and as her future mother-in-law followed her to the door with broken words of 'explaining it to-morrow—' 'Wilfred will be so distressed,' she turned and faced her for one instant. 'Lady Ayrton,' she said, 'tell me the truth. Has he been drinking?'

There was no need for an answer, but the poor woman caught the girl's two hands in her own. 'Aveline,' she entreated, 'don't be too hard on him. It is so long since I have seen him so. I was quite happy. And your influence? Many young men——' she went on, disjointedly. 'Oh, don't say or do anything hurriedly! Wait a little.'

'I am going to my own room. I am not going to do anything to-night,' said Aveline. She was quivering with eagerness to get away.

'Thank you—God bless you!' exclaimed Lady Ayrton, snatching at the half promise of deliberation that the words contained.

And Aveline rushed to her own room, and there throwing herself into a chair, burst into tears.

'Why must things be so much harder for me than for others? I had made up my mind to it, and I thought it was right,' she sobbed.

Mr. Ayrton and his mother left almost immediately. Between them the two women managed to get him away without his being seen by Mr. Verney. And Leonora was sent to bed. She sat up for some time, however—she re-wrote her crushed letter to Mr. Hereward, and closed and directed it, ready to be posted the next morning. It was exactly the same as its predecessor, but with the addition of a postscript marked 'private,' which ran thus: 'I don't know if you have heard that Avé is going to be married to Mr. Ayrton. At least I'm afraid she is, and I *hate* him.'

Aveline woke the next morning with the strange feeling known to us all, that something of importance, which for the moment she could not clearly recollect, had happened. As she gradually gathered

together her ideas and realised the events of the day before, her perplexity changed its direction, but only to increase in intensity.

'What can I do? What shall I do? Will mamma not help me in some way? Should I go to papa or to her? I wonder what Modeste and her grandmother would tell me to do,' were the ideas that chased each other round her brain as she dressed. She felt nervous and almost dazed as she sat waiting for her mother at the breakfast-table.

'What will she say? How will she bear the disappointment? But at worst she can't blame me,' thought the girl, as she turned tremulously at the sound of the door opening.

'Good morning, my dear. Is your headache better? Lady Ayrton told me you thought it best to go to bed. Mr. Ayrton had a headache too, or else he was cross at your disappearance. They did not stay long. I think it must be something in the weather, for I feel rather done up myself. Dear me, how late it is! And we must be at Sophia's by eleven; we arranged to go to her dressmaker's this morning. I want to know her prices before ordering any of your dresses.'

Lady Christina ran on so fast that, till she fairly stopped to take breath, Aveline could not have got in a word. But her face had all this time been growing more and more amazed-looking, her blue eyes opening more and more widely with an expression almost of horror. And when it was possible for her to speak, she ejaculated but the one word,

'Mamma!'

Lady Christina glanced at her for an instant with a sort of contempt, not, however, altogether unmingled with uneasiness.

'What are you staring at me like that for, Aveline?' she exclaimed irritably. 'Really, my dear, there are times when you make yourself look as if you had not all your senses.'

Aveline took no notice of the taunt. Her energies were too completely concentrated in the one direction.

'Mamma,' she said again, this time in a low, almost imploring tone, '*can* it be that you do not know? You must have seen—his mother knew it—that, that Mr. Ayrton was drunk last night. Mamma, oh, mamma, it must alter everything.'

Lady Christina glanced at her daughter again, this time the contempt was uppermost.

'*Really*, Aveline, foolish as I know you to be, I did not think quite so poorly of you as you force me to do. And so unladylike in your expressions. Drunk!—what a word to apply to a gentleman, and to the gentleman you are going to marry!'

'It is more ungentlemanlike to be it, than it is unladylike of me to *say* it,' returned Aveline. 'And you are mistaken, mamma. I am not going to marry him.'

'You *are*,' retorted her mother, losing her temper. 'I shall not allow my daughter to jilt any man.'

Aveline rose from her chair.

'I will go to papa,' she said, 'and see what he says,' and she turned towards the door.

Lady Christina's tone changed at once.

'Aveline, I *beseech* you, do nothing of the kind. Your father is not well this morning. He has had worrying letters—more expense for Chris, and your Uncle Bart can't help him—and—and other things. This coming to Paris has cost more than we expected, and the London house not letting. Aveline, don't be exaggerated. You have taken up Mr. Ayrton mistakenly. He had a headache, and Sir Francis had been very sharp with him, and he may have taken a *little* more than is strictly advisable. I don't think he has a very strong head; and then he was rather irritable, I suppose, and something you said put him out, Sophia told me—not that she blamed you in the least. That was it, was it not?'

'Partly, I suppose,' Aveline replied vaguely, thankful that her mother knew nothing about the letter to Mr. Hereward.

'Well, you see how it looks when it is taken reasonably. We will talk about it afterwards; but, I entreat you, Aveline, say nothing as yet to your father. I don't, no—I *don't* know what we should do if this marriage were to fall through,' and Lady Christina clasped her hands together.

Aveline was not proof against this new species of attack. Her only safety lay in flight.

'I will go before papa comes in,' she said. 'If he saw me I could not conceal that something was the matter. I don't want any more breakfast. I have drunk my coffee.'

'I will not take you to Sophia's this morning,' said her mother. 'I will go myself, and—and—just see a little. Go out with Leo, my dear; your nerves have been upset, and I will see you when I come in.'

And Aveline, ashamed of her weakness, dissatisfied, and miserable, yet knowing that she had no strength to do otherwise, once her mother appealed to her as she had done, left the room.

Things turned out easier for her in the first place than she could have hoped. There was a respite, for Lady Christina came back from the Ayrtons' hotel with the news of their leaving Paris

for a few days. Sir Francis had a longing for country air, and they were going off to Compiègne at once. Aveline could not repress a heartfelt ejaculation of thankfulness, which Lady Christina diplomatically affected not to hear, and her whole tone and manner remained softened and sympathising.

'Your nerves have been upset of late, my dear child,' she said gently. 'I can quite understand it; you have had so much to think of. A few days quietly by ourselves will do both you and me good.'

'Lady Ayrton has been making mamma promise to be very kind and patient with me. I see it all,' thought Aveline. 'She knows me so well. I wish mamma had kept to the way she spoke this morning. *Then* I could have resisted her. But poor papa, and all the troubles! And after all, if I give this up, what else have I to look forward to? If we were really poor people—*quite* poor—and I could work for them, how much happier it would be!'

And then there rose before her the recollection of Mr. Ayrton's red, inflamed-looking face, of his coarse tones and repulsive presence of the evening before.

'No,' shuddered Aveline, 'I *can't* marry him. What a fool he is! Why did he not keep on the mask, if it was a mask, a little longer? Once married to him my duty would be clear. *That* is what is torturing me—the not knowing what to do. If it is the case, as his mother said, that last night was accidental? For it is true that Sir Francis is very hard upon him. And whatever his faults and failings are, he has been straightforward and disinterested to me. Can he have heard any gossip about Mr. Hereward? If so, I don't wonder that he was angry at thinking I was writing to him.'

And as the days went on this new idea gathered fresh force. It was strengthened, almost unconsciously to Aveline, by little allusions on her mother's part to hints contained in Lady Ayrton's letters of Wilfred's distress of mind.

'Poor fellow,' Lady Christina would murmur; 'he has no tact, no *savoir faire*, as his mother says. He is too bunglingly honest, and gets blamed where a clever man—a man more alive to his own interests, a man of the world, in short—would get off scot-free.'

'I don't see——' began Aveline, and then she hesitated.

'What, my love?' said her mother, encouragingly.

'A man need not be a selfish man of the world to be gentle and courteous, and to—to know when he has had as much wine as is good for him,' said Aveline, her cheeks flaming.

'Ah,' said Lady Christina, slowly shaking her head, 'you are so inexperienced, Aveline. What do you know of those charming, to all appearance chivalrous men, behind the scenes? They will steal a girl's heart with their gentle, courteous ways, and then make fun of her. Ah, no, my love, all is not gold that glitters.'

And though Aveline would have died rather than let her mother know it, the shaft went home.

Mademoiselle de Villers' marriage was to be in ten days. The usual evening party for the signing of the contract took place the day before the return of the Ayrtons from Compiègne, and for this Aveline was grateful. Lady Ayrton and her son would certainly have been invited, and, since her last conversation with Modeste, above all with the consciousness of her own increased misgivings, she shrank with the greatest reluctance from appearing with her *fiancé* before her quick-eyed and quick-witted friends. She exerted herself to seem particularly bright and lively, so that Lady Christina herself was deceived, and laid her head on her pillow the night of the *soirée de fiançailles* with the happy conviction that Aveline had come back to her senses.

'The going to Compiègne was an excellent move on Sophia's part,' she said to herself; 'and this marriage coming on will make Aveline realise what it would be to give up all thoughts of her own.'

The next day brought Lady Ayrton. With great tact she asked at once for Miss Verney; Lady Christina by a happy coincidence was on the point of going out, and begged Aveline to excuse her to her friend. Aveline hesitated.

'I don't want to see her alone, mamma,' she began; but she was quickly interrupted—

'My dear, it is exactly what I do wish. I will not interfere in any way, or attempt to influence you. You must judge for yourself, Aveline. It is a thing in which no one can decide for you.'

And with these words the girl felt that her fate was again taken out of her hands.

'I can't decide for myself when it is to make other people unhappy—and mamma knows it,' thought Aveline, as she opened the drawing-room door.

And had she been far more resolute than was possible for her to be, her decision would have been shaken by the sight of Lady Ayrton's appealing face. She looked white and careworn. Truth to tell, the sojourn at Compiègne had not been a time of

peace and sunshine for the poor woman. She had longed for, and yet dreaded the return to Paris, when she must learn the result of Aveline's 'thinking things over.' She felt, as regarded her son, like a gambler who has staked his all on a last throw.

She was not of a nature to act with much diplomacy, had diplomacy been required. But such was not the case, and no tact or skill could have stood her in such good stead as did the display of her real and intense anxiety. As Aveline entered the room Lady Ayrton rose from her seat and came towards her, both hands extended.

'My dear,' she began, 'I asked to see you alone. I am so anxious—I have been so unhappy. And Wilfred, too'—the words came less easily here—'Wilfred has been so unhappy and so remorseful,' and with this Lady Ayrton put her hands on the girl's shoulders and burst into tears.

What could Aveline do, what could any girl in her place and of her nature have done, but soothe the poor woman with words which bore more significance than the speaker fully realised? It is always painful to see the tears of old or even elderly people—to Aveline, unaccustomed to much expression of emotion, it was peculiarly so. And, before she well knew what she was about, there was Lady Ayrton rapturously kissing and thanking her, assuring her that the lesson should be one by which her son should profit as long as he lived, that *never* should her sweet girl, her daughter-to-be, repent her generosity, her goodness!

'And he may come to see you again, may he?' concluded Wilfred's mother; 'or will you come to us, as you used? Would you spend to-morrow with us? Sir Francis is longing to see you,' to which proposal Aveline agreed. A reconciliation scene in her mother's presence and with her mother's remarks and felicitations would, she felt, have been more than she *could* stand.

She was not nervous at the idea of meeting Mr. Ayrton now—the worst was over, the die was cast, and there was nothing to do but walk on, not blindfold, but refusing to see.

And the next day passed much as she had expected. Wilfred was sheepishly subdued, making clumsy efforts to show his regret and gratitude, which, out of a sort of almost grotesque pity, she received graciously enough for him to have recovered before the end of the afternoon his usual bearing of clownishly good-humoured self-satisfaction.

'And this,' thought Aveline to herself, with an instinct stronger than the inexperience on which her mother laid so much weight, 'this is to be my life.'

Sir Francis was as charming as to her he had always been. But she thought him looking very ill—much worse than when she had last seen him; and more than once she caught his eyes fixed upon her with an expression half-melancholy, half-scrutinising, which puzzled and yet touched her. It was like, and yet not like, the glances which from time to time her father darted at her from under his eyebrows.

'Is he sorry for me, or does he look down upon me?' she asked herself. And, indeed, at this juncture the question was one which Sir Francis Ayrton could not himself have answered.

CHAPTER X.

THERE was a large gathering of well-dressed people at the church of St. Z—— the morning of the marriage of Monsieur Maurice de Bois-Hubert and Mademoiselle Modeste de Villers, a much larger gathering than the Verneys in their inexperience had expected. For Madame de Boncœur had impressed upon them that it was to be a very quiet affair.

'Times are changed,' said the old lady, 'and not for the better, since the day, twenty-three years ago, when I married my Alice. That was a brilliant spectacle. But in the present state of our unhappy country, any great display, even on an occasion of undoubted rejoicing, would be in very questionable taste.'

Thus it came to pass that when Mr. Verney, his wife, and daughter entered the church, they found almost every corner occupied. The places reserved for the relations and near friends of the bride and bridegroom were inaccessible; it was all Mr. Verney could do to find separate seats for Lady Christina and Aveline at some little distance from each other, and standing-room for himself in the shelter of a pillar.

Aveline was not sorry to be, so to speak, alone, and free from her mother's whispered comments. The church was not a very large one, but things had been well arranged. Exquisite white flowers against a background of palms and rare shrubs tempered the gilding and colour of the altar, too brilliant and ornate for northern eyes.

'I have never seen a French church look so solemn and yet beautiful,' thought Aveline, and when the music, the very best of

its kind, was added to the whole, the girl felt almost too deeply impressed. The tears would come to her eyes, when they descried the figure of Modeste, familiar and yet strange in its new dignity of bridal attire, kneeling beside the man she had chosen for her husband, and not a word of the service was lost upon the English maiden.

'How is it,' she asked herself, 'I have been at several marriages, but I never felt like this before? Is the French service more impressive than ours, or is it that I have never before thought so much about it? How glad I am to know that Modeste really loves him, and to feel, as sure as one can feel, that she is going to be happy!'

But with these reflections there returned to her with irrepressible force, the misgivings, the cruel misgivings, she had so tried to stifle.

'How should I feel if I were to-day kneeling there in Modeste's place, with *him*, Wilfred Ayrton, beside me? How shall I feel when the day comes for it, as come it must?'

She shut her eyes for an instant—a feeling of dizziness came over her. The bridal party by this time had left the altar and withdrawn to the sacristy, there to await their friends and their congratulations. People began to talk together, for the most part in subdued tones, but some ladies in Miss Verney's immediate neighbourhood were less cautious.

'So there's another happy pair done for,' were the first words Aveline overheard in the sharp nasal tones of a *not* first-class American. 'Let's hope they're going to have a better time than most French couples, by all accounts.'

'Well now, Stella, I don't agree with you there. You've got your notions out of novels. For my part I believe there's good and bad of all kinds. I'd take a Frenchman to-morrow, if——'

'If he'd got a title—that's the plain English of it with you,' laughed the first speaker. 'But don't you be in a hurry, Cilly. Look about you a while. And, by the bye, what's become of Will? He said he'd be sure to be here.'

'I've not seen him, and I'm not going to look for him. He'll be tied on to his young lady and her people to-day. He's on his good behaviour since that flare-up he told us of, you know.'

'All the same I'd be sorry to bet on that marriage ever coming off,' replied the first speaker. 'Will won't find it so easy to keep on his good behaviour for long; there'll be another flare-up some day when he gets just a little bit excited, you know, Cilly. It isn't as if he cared about the girl.'

'But he cares about Garthdean—isn't that the name of the place he's to have when the marriage comes off? It's real mean of the old people to entrap the poor fellow into a marriage by bribing him like that, and so I told him from the first at Pau.'

'Well, he's not married yet,' resumed Miss Lucilla's sister or cousin—Aveline never knew the relationship of the two speakers—'and with your money, Cilly, I say it'll be strange if you can't get what you want for it, considering you've come to Europe on purpose. But don't you think we'd best go now? We'll have a better view of them coming out if we station ourselves by the door.'

Then ensued a rustling and moving which told Miss Verney that her unwelcome neighbours had taken themselves off.

They had not seen her, of that she was certain; there had been no intention in a single word of those she had overheard. Trembling from head to foot, too bewildered to think clearly, Aveline drew back in her corner as far as possible and tried to collect herself. Her one idea for some time was to remain hidden till she could succeed in doing so. She did not even look up when, by the whispered remarks about her, she became aware that the bridal cortège was passing down the aisle.

'Modeste will not distinguish me among so many,' she said to herself, 'and I must, I *must* think. Oh, I do *so* hope they will not be there! I *could* not speak to him, and it would be almost harder to speak to his mother. I have thought her so sincere—I have believed he cared for me for myself. Fool that I have been!'

Five minutes later she heard her mother's voice.

'We are going, Aveline. Are you asleep, my dear? Why, what is the matter? You look so white. The heat, I suppose?' as Aveline murmured some vague excuse. 'Thank goodness, there is nothing to cry about in Modeste's marriage,' with a rather sharp glance at her daughter's eyes. 'I cannot imagine what has become of the Ayrtons. Sophia was quite determined to come. They will make their appearance at the rue de Touraine, however, no doubt.'

But in this, to Aveline's immense relief, Lady Christina did not prove a true prophet. The truth was that Mr. Ayrton had declined to accompany his mother, and she thought it better to stay at home than to risk inconvenient questions and remarks.

'I had such a headache,' she told her friend when Christina drove round to inquire.

'Ah, yes, with the heat, I suppose. Aveline is not well to-day, either. She walked home with her father, and asked me to tell you how sorry she was not to have seen you and Wilfred.'

This message, needless to say, was an invention; Aveline had never mentioned the Ayrtons' name. Her pallor and evident suffering had drawn down upon her much sympathy from her friends and some veiled indignation from her mother.

'So silly and sentimental of you to look as if you were going to faint because your friend is happily married,' said Lady Christina cuttingly, though in a low voice; while old Madame de Boncœur kissed her with a tenderness that nearly brought the tears to her eyes, and Modeste whispered, 'Dear Aveline, I cannot bear to see you looking so ill. It is the only cloud in my sky to-day.'

Mr. Verney had his own ideas on the subject, but said nothing; and Aveline was grateful to be left alone, and thankful to find herself at last in her own room, free to decide on her course of action.

'If what I heard is true, I cannot marry him. The one thing I believed in was his disinterestedness. There can be no mistake. Those women cannot but have meant him. The name "Will," and Garthdean, my future home, as Lady Ayrton always calls it! Still, I suppose it is fair to ask for an explanation—for the truth. But whom can I ask, and how can I bear my life with mamma when it is all given up?'

There came a tap at the door.

'Come in,' said Aveline, starting up. But she need not have started; it was only Leo.

'Avé,' said she, 'papa sent me to you. He told me you had such a bad headache. What is it, dear Avé? You look so very ill.'

For all answer Aveline put her arms round her young sister, and burst into tears.

'Leo, dear, I don't know what to do,' she exclaimed. 'It seems as if I were fated never to know what I should do. I had fixed to marry Mr. Ayrton. I thought it my duty. Then I wanted to give it up after that evening, you know; and I was persuaded into it again, and again I thought it right. And then to-day, at the church, when I saw Modeste and Monsieur de Bois-Hubert married, and I felt that they cared for each other, and that Modeste was not afraid of what she was doing, it all came over me quite differently again, and——'

Leo's eyes were sparkling.

'And you felt you could not marry that man?' she interrupted. 'Oh, Avé, keep to that, it is the right feeling——'

'Stop!' said Aveline, 'you haven't heard half.'

Then she went on to tell Leonora what she had heard, and the interpretation she could not but put upon it. 'And what can I do?' she finished by saying helplessly.

Leo's face was a study; her colour went and came; her eyes by now were positively gleaming.

'Aveline,' she said, 'you are older than I, and I suppose I've no right to say it, but do you know I am really ashamed of you. Here are you wondering what you should do, and thinking things are so hard for you, when you should be ready to jump with joy—*I* am, I know—that you've found it all out. I knew that man didn't really care for you—he *couldn't*. And now you see that he has only wanted to marry you to please his father and mother, and to get them to give him that place and lots of money, and *yet* you say you don't know what to do.'

'I must find out the exact truth,' said Aveline. 'I cannot act upon gossip overheard by accident. And I don't know whom to get the truth from. His mother'—and Aveline gave a shiver—'his mother would throw herself upon me and cry—and—oh, Leo, it would be horrible!'

'I can't understand how you can be sorry for her or for his father. They were ready to sacrifice you. I daresay that man's just horribly wicked—I daresay,' said Leo, impressively, 'he gets drunk every evening when we don't see him.'

'Perhaps,' Aveline agreed. 'But, however bad he is, I am dreadfully sorry for his father and mother.'

There was a moment or two's silence.

'Will you speak to papa?' said Leo, abruptly. 'I can call him. He's not gone out yet, and mamma has not come home.'

'No,' said Aveline, 'I don't want to mix papa up in it. He would be so fearfully angry about it all—with the Ayrtons, and—and with mamma. I want him to know of it, when it is done, as quite my own doing—not that I had found out anything. I will tell you, Leo, what I think will be best. I will speak to Sir Francis Ayrton. He is a gentleman, he cannot deceive me when I put it to him plainly. And I have a right to know.'

'I should think so, indeed,' said Leo. 'Well, then, write him a note—now, this minute—to ask him when you can see him alone. I'll take it when I go out with Elise. Write it now, Avé.'

And, sternly determined, the young girl stood over her sister

till the words were written. The letters were tremulous and the note was somewhat incoherently expressed, but Leo cared little for that.

'Once she sees him and tells all, it must come to an end,' thought she. For in her heart she doubted if Mr. Ayrton's father had taken much part in the scheme.

'It is all his mother,' she thought to herself, 'and *mamma*, though I will never say so as long as I live. But when I am grown up, I shall not be as meek and giving in as poor Avé.'

Sir Francis Ayrton was surprised and somewhat discomposed by the receipt of Miss Verney's note.

'Some new misbehaviour of Wilfred's, I suppose,' he said to himself. 'She is getting frightened, perhaps. So much the better for her. I have never been able to understand the girl. I think I have never felt sure of its going through. Thank Heaven, *I* had nothing to do with it. But that makes it all the harder lines that I should be dragged into it now. Why can't the girl speak to Sophia? Why can't she have it out with that precious son of mine himself? If a nice, pretty girl will engage herself to a cub, she should take the consequences.'

Sir Francis's bark, however, was worse than his bite. The note which Aveline received from him the next morning was couched in the kindest terms, naming an hour at which she could see him alone, delicately inferring rather than expressing his gratification at the trust she placed in him.

But though he did not let it be seen, the invalid gentleman was nearly as nervous as Aveline herself when, the next afternoon, she was ushered into his sitting-room. He was as usual on his sofa, and, as he had promised her, alone.

'It is kind of you to let me come to see you. I—I wish I had not needed to ask it,' began Aveline, her lip quivering.

'My dear young lady,' replied the baronet, 'you have every conceivable right to ask me what you choose. Not merely as a friend, but as——'

'I know what you are going to say,' interrupted the girl. 'Don't say it, please. I shall never be more than a friend to you. You will understand when you hear what I have to say.'

'Oh!' said Sir Francis, and the low exclamation sounded so like a groan of pain that Aveline glanced at him anxiously. But though pale—very pale—he was smiling slightly, though his hand was pressed against his side. 'There is nothing the matter,' he went on hastily, detecting her frightened expression. 'Anything, nothing, gives me a little spasm, but it is over already.'

And so it was. Aveline's first words had told him all. It was a sharper disappointment than he had suspected himself of being still capable of feeling, as regarded anything in connection with his graceless son. 'I had counted on it more than I knew,' thought Wilfred Ayrton's father. 'It was a sort of last chance for him.'

'So please go on with what you have to say, my dear—Miss Verney,' he added with a momentary hesitation.

Aveline's eyes filled with tears. It had pleased her for Sir Francis to call her by her Christian name—to fancy herself already beginning to fill a daughter's place to the daughterless man. But she forced herself to go on, as he bade her.

'I have heard something—accidentally—in fact I overheard it,' she said slowly, 'which—which has altogether changed my opinion of your son, and made me feel I cannot marry him. I want to tell it to you, and I must ask you to tell me if it is true.'

'I may perhaps not be able to do so,' replied he. The girl puzzled him—there were plenty of old scandals about Wilfred from his schooldays onwards, but of late the father had believed him to have been conducting himself better. 'Why should she come to me if she has got hold of any of his delinquencies? It would have been more natural to speak to her mother, or,' as Lady Christina's hard face rose before him, 'to her father.'

'Oh, yes,' said Aveline, 'you can, for it has to do with you.' And then in simple but clear words she related what she had overheard. 'It is he himself who has told it, you see. Oh, Sir Francis—is it true that you *bribed* him to marry me? And I—fool that I have been!—do you know that I believed that in his way he cared for me—that he was, though rough and unattractive, honest and disinterested? That was his one recommendation to me, and that is gone.'

Sir Francis sat for a moment, with his hand so shading his face that Aveline could not see it, in perfect silence. And for that moment Aveline, in the vividness of her sympathy with him, almost brought herself to hope she was mistaken.

'Is it true?' she said at last, very gently.

The invalid raised himself, and there was a look on his face that Aveline had never seen there before, and which she never forgot.

'Yes,' he said sharply, 'it is true.'

One or two tears made their way to her eyes and rolled down her face. Sir Francis caught sight of them and his voice softened.

'I do not wish to exonerate myself,' he said, 'but, nevertheless, I should like you to know that I had no hand in it, beyond agreeing to what his mother begged me to do. She—poor thing—he is her only child, and she thought such an end as she hoped for justified all means, I suppose. But as you ask me plainly, I answer you in the same way. Wilfred would never have dreamt of asking you to marry him but for the material advantages promised to him if he succeeded in his suit. And in saying this I infer no sort of mortification to you—rather the contrary. My son is a man *incapable* of appreciating such a woman as you. But for your really astounding inexperience, you would have felt this yourself. Did you never feel it?' And he looked up at her sharply again.

'I don't know,' said Aveline. 'But I believed in his disinterestedness—completely.' She sat silent for a moment or two. Then a sort of bitterness of indignation came over her. 'Sir Francis Ayrton,' she said, 'it was doing me a terrible injury to let me do so. No one has any right to deceive a girl like that.'

Sir Francis hesitated.

'No, I suppose not. But I am not going to say any more about who was the most to blame. It is useless. But you, yourself—you could not have loved him? Do you think it right to marry a man you could neither love nor respect?'

On her side Aveline hesitated.

'I thought I did respect him when I accepted him,' she said; 'and in some ways I continued to think so till yesterday. And I did not dislike him—and—there were so many motives. I have been so happy with you and Lady Ayrton—and I wanted to be of use to papa and all of them at home,' and here her voice broke down altogether.

'Poor child,' said Sir Francis. 'Yes, you were right as regards me. I would have loved you very much as a daughter, Aveline—now that I have lost you I see how much.'—'For I see the guileless creature she after all really is,' he added to himself.—'But, my dear,' he went on, 'as it is pretty certainly the last time we shall ever talk together in this way, let me give you a warning. It is very seldom—I don't say *never*, but very seldom that a loveless marriage turns out happily. Of course mutual respect is a good foundation—and—when there is that, and a girl does not care for any other *more*, there is less to fear.'

He looked keenly at Aveline as he spoke. She felt herself change colour.

'I—I meant to do right,' she said faintly. 'Have I been all wrong—all wrong together?'

'You are right now, at any rate,' he replied firmly.

'And what shall I do?' she said, with—now that the stimulus of her resolution was past—a sort of return to the helplessness which so irritated Leonora. 'How can I break it off? What shall I say—how can I bear what—what mamma will say? Oh, I did not mean that,' she went on, clasping her hands. 'I should not have said that—but it is all so difficult.'

Sir Francis reflected for a moment.

'I will do what I can to make it easier for you,' he said. 'I owe you that, surely. I will tell my son your decision.'

'Shall you tell him all I have told you?' asked Aveline.

'I shall take care that no possible blame shall attach to you, either with him if he attempted to throw any on you, or with my wife. And if you prefer it, I will also tell your father how things stand.'

'Yes,' said Aveline, 'I should be very grateful if you would do so. I do not want to be the cause of—of any discussion between my father and mother.'

'I understand,' said Sir Francis. 'I will save you all the trouble I can. Now, my dear, I must ask you to say good-bye. I am very tired.'

'How thoughtless I have been!' exclaimed Aveline, starting up.

'No, no. I am very weak. It is not your fault. God bless you, my dear child! I wish I could have called you such in reality. But at least I shall feel no *more* self-reproach on your account. Yes, it is really good-bye,' as he held her hand a moment in his. 'We shall leave Paris almost immediately now, and—there is no saying how soon I may not have to start on a longer journey still.'

'Good-bye,' said Aveline, 'and thank you—for everything.'

She drew her veil down when she rejoined Elise, and held her parasol so, when they got out into the street, that neither the maid nor the passers-by should see she was crying.

Her father and mother were fortunately dining out that evening without her, so she managed to avoid seeing either of them for more than a hurried moment. And she and Leonora spent the evening together.

There was one person who fell asleep that night with a lighter heart than for long—that person was Aveline's young sister.

(*To be continued.*)

At the Sign of the Ship.

Of Log-Rolling.—A Desperate Case.—Startling Revelations!—The 'Hayward Letters.'—Mr. Hayward Exposed.—Of Criticism.—'An Enemy hath done this thing!'—Of Misprints.—Of the End of the World.—Lines on the 'Destiny of the Universe,' by a Young Lady.—Of Books and their Prices.—Of Arrow-Release.—Of Unknown Correspondents.—A Poem.—Poor Needlewomen.

IN Mr. Hayward's *Letters*[1] there are various entertaining passages, and among them what some moralists would call a dreadful example of 'log-rolling.' Mr. Thackeray (by the way he is called 'Mr. Thackery' in the table of contents) was not a very well known man in 1845. Mr. Macvey Napier, not a very well remembered man in 1887, was then editing the *Edinburgh Review*. To him Mr. Longman recommended Mr. Thackeray, 'thinking he would be a good hand for light articles.' Mr. Longman was not mistaken in this judgment. There was never a better hand at light articles. But Mr. Macvey Napier had not heard of the proposed contributor, and, as he said, 'in a journal like the *Edinbro'* it is always of importance to keep up in respect of names.' As if Mr. Thackeray's name, the name already of the author of *Barry Lyndon*, was so obscure! However, we come to *expose* Mr. Thackeray, not to praise him.

* * *

A record has leaped to light. Where is Mr. Thackeray now? He, or rather Mr. Hayward, must be consigned to the Purgatory of log-rollers. Mr. Thackeray's novel *Vanity Fair* was actually praised (hideous and incredible as it may seem) *by his personal friend*, Mr. Hayward, in the *Edinburgh Review*, a journal in which he himself wrote, or may have thought of writing, being esteemed a good hand for light articles. This is not the worst of

[1] Murray. London: 1886.

it. There are more revelations: there was a lady in this dark and dread conspiracy. In the *Hayward Letters* (i. 120) it is written: 'When a few numbers of *Vanity Fair* had appeared, it was thought that Mr. Hayward might consent to review them in the *Edinburgh Review*. He was very good-natured about it.' What an appalling laxity of phrase! 'Good-natured'! Thus do worldlings speak of literary crime. Mr. Hayward was not only good-natured, but so busy that, apparently, he had not time to read through the book he was to criticise. But 'a lady kindly undertook to mark the passages which might be usefully quoted,' —observe the word 'usefully'—'and Hayward thereupon consented, and wrote a review in the *Edinburgh Review* upon the basis furnished by' . . . the author of 'the above letter.' The 'above' letter, by the way, is not 'above,' but follows these ghastly disclosures. The lady's letter, to drop the mood of irony, does the highest credit to her as a critic.

* * *

Is this the worst—that Mr. Hayward reviewed and praised *Vanity Fair*, assisted by the kindness of a lady? No, this is not all. Does the reader remember who it was that Mr. Thackeray honoured by the dedication of *Vanity Fair*, that immortal picture of human life? If not, he may consult *Vanity Fair*, and then the whole iniquity of these unparalleled transactions will flash, in one lurid glare, upon his ethical consciousness. Happily such deeds, like cannibalism and cock-fighting, are almost obsolete.[1]

* * *

'Bless that girl, she is always right!' said the Paphlagonian usurper, about his daughter, the Princess Angelica. Mr. Thackeray was almost always right. Any young man of letters may read with profit his letters to Mr. Hayward on literary enmities. There are authors so sensitive and miserable that when their books are 'cut up' they hasten to wail aloud and cry, 'An enemy hath done this thing.' Why should it be an enemy? Is your book so excellent that all men, not blinded by private hatred, must admire and extol it? A critic may detest your manners, your style, your ideas, your affectations, your Greek and Latin—everything you

[1] Here followed, in the original MS., some passages 'wrote sarcastic.' But the rhymes which launched this craft, a year ago, declared that—

We shall do everything—but scold,
In this our stall of *bric-à-brac!*

do—and yet may never even have seen you. Probably there is a good deal of truth in what the critic says about you, and you had better hold your tongue and make the best of it. One may admire the author though one detests the man, or may like the man though one detests the author. Thus, when Mr. Thackeray failed, by one vote, to be elected to the Athenæum Club by the committee, he did not go about complaining of being persecuted. 'As a satirical writer,' he says to Mr. Hayman, 'I rather wonder that I have not made more enemies than I have. I don't mean enemies in a bad sense, but men conscientiously opposed to my style, art, opinions, impertinences, and so forth.' Mr. Thackeray goes on to observe that he 'feels almost frightened at the kindness of people regarding him.' This is the right way to look at these things, to take appreciation as kindness, and opposition, not as the 'stab' of the 'enemy,' but as the inevitable, natural, even desirable, result of the blessed differences in human temperaments, tastes, opinions. Probably not one severe review in a thousand is written by a personal enemy of the author—an enemy 'in the bad sense.' It is written by some one 'conscientiously opposed to the author's style, art, opinions, impertinences, and so forth.' But it is difficult to persuade authors to believe this simple doctrine. Their hostile critics are usually 'enemies,' if you listen to them—enemies 'in the bad sense.'

* * *

It is not the act of an enemy to point out to Mr. Henry E. Carlisle, the discreet editor of the *Hayward Letters*, that a new edition will be improved by a little more attention to correct printing. Here is a sentence from a letter of Count D'Orsay's:—'Après *is* coup qu'il a fait, il serait bête de s'arrêter, il *eroit* à son etoile et à sa mission, il coquettera peut-*erre* quelque temps, mais le resultat sera ce que je vous dis.' *Is coup*, and *il eroit*, and *peut-erre* make a constellation of *coquilles*. The French print English words wildly; we should improve them by a better example.

* * *

The gloom of the general outlook, political and social, has not been gloomy enough for the astronomical thinker described in the following verses by Miss May Kendall. As to the ultimate fortunes of the round world, let us hope better things than she suggests, and trust that, as all appearances indicate, and as the dissensions of astronomers declare, it is 'made so fast that it

cannot be moved.' To an inquirer who persists in asking whether 'we shall wander into space or fall into the sun,' might be answered, '*Tu ne quæsieris, scire nefas!*'

TAKING LONG VIEWS.

('Take short views.'—SYDNEY SMITH.)

His locks were wild, and wild his eye,
  Furrowed his brow with anxious thought;
Musing, I asked him, 'Tell me why
  You seem thus vacant and distraught?'
Sadly he gazed into my face:
  He said, 'I have no respite, none!
Oh, shall we wander into space,
  Or fall into the sun?

'Astronomers I've sought in tears,
  And ah! it's terribly remiss,
That, after all these anxious years,
  They cannot even tell us *this.*
Though each man seems to prove his case,
  Each contradicts the other one,
And—*do* we wander into space,
  Or fall into the sun?'

'Comfort!' I said; 'I can't discern
  The nature of our planet's end;
Nor should I greatly care to learn:—
  We've many æons left, my friend!
Whether we last from age to age
  A frozen ball, or turn to flame,
To me, at this inspiring stage,
  Is very much the same.

'Observe Humanity's advance,
  And Evolution's giant strides!
Remark on what a smooth expanse
  The nation's barque at anchor rides!
The march of Intellect retrace.'
  He moaned: 'I don't care what we've done.
Oh, shall we wander into space,
  Or fall into the sun?

'If we should fall, you understand,
  Such heat the crash might generate,
The solar system would expand
  Into its primal gaseous state.
It would be awkward, I maintain,
  The same old cycle to renew;
For, once let things come round again,
  And *we* should come round too!'

I cried, 'The prophecy forbear!
  Of finite woes we have enough.
What, travel through the old despair,
  Experience the old rebuff!
I'd rather haunt the void Afar
  For endless ages; would rejoice
To be a harmless, frozen star,
  If I might have my choice!'

He gazed at me with aspect strange;
  He only said, 'How would it be
If this poor planet should derange
  The solar system's equity;
If, when the sun our planet met,
  The sun himself began to fall,
Another system to upset,
  And so on through them all?'

'Peace, peace!' I said. 'However dark
  The destiny the æons bear,
You won't be here the wreck to mark.'
  'Ah, *that*,' he cried, 'is my despair!
I want to know what will take place,
  I want to know whate'er is done—
Oh, shall we wander into space,
  Or fall into the sun?'

M. K.

* * *

The sellers of secondhand books are, no doubt, becoming very learned—even too learned. It is curious to look at the prices attached, in their catalogues, to the French illustrated books of the last century, from Boucher to Moreau le Jeune, and compare them with the prices in Cohen's *Guide de l'Amateurs*. The English

booksellers seem to take the highest price from the new edition (1887), and then to read shillings for francs.

On devient amateur, mais on naît Bouquiniste!

Still, errors are made occasionally. A copy of the first edition of *Robinson Crusoe* has lately been offered for fifty shillings. A difficult question in casuistry is raised; may the amateur, who knows the real worth of the book, justifiably purchase it at the price set by the vendor, who, apparently, does not know? One may argue that the seller is probably making two hundred per cent., that he bought the book for a song (perhaps a 'song of sixpence') from some one who knew nothing at all. On the other hand,—but the arguments on the other side are no less obvious. Happily one does not often fall into this sort of temptation. Another example quite melancholy to think upon is the appearance in a bookseller's catalogue of a 'lot' styled 'Cheap French Reading.' They were seventeen volumes at a shilling apiece, and three of the volumes were Alfred de Musset's *Spectacle dans un Fauteuil*, 1833. It is a book honourably placed even in the collections of M. Eugène Paillet. But the copy advertised was 'half-bound in calf, neat.' What a profanation of a *Romantique* of the good date! The half-binder must have clipped away five-sixths of the value. Lately an 'uncut' *Tom Jones* (first edition) and an uncut *Vicar of Wakefield* came into the market. They were sold for 125*l.* Yet booksellers and others will persist in half-binding in calf, and clipping, books of great interest. *L'homme est un méchant animal!*

* * *

As LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE may possibly reach some one 'in countries by wild men and cannibals haunted,' that happy voyager is requested to keep an eye on the way in which the natives use the bow; if they use bows at all. The point to study is the method of the *release* of the arrow. Mr. Edward Morse (of Salem, Mass., U.S.) has published in the *Bulletin of the Essex Institute* some curious researches into this subject. He finds that children draw their little bows with the thumb and bent fore-finger, clutching the arrow. This he calls the *primary* release. The arrows of some American tribes have a knob, to give a more secure hold. This release needs a very strong hand, or a very weak bow. In the *secondary* release the arrow is held as in the *primary*, but two fingers, the second and third, also drag at the string. In the

tertiary release the fore-finger is nearly straight, and helps the second to pull the string. In the *Mediterranean* release, used from time immemorial by the cultivated peoples 'about the borders of the Grecian sea,' the release is like our own. The string is drawn back by the tips of the second, third, and fourth fingers, the arrow being lightly held between the first and second fingers. The thumb is oddly used in the *Mongolian* release. The Primary release is used only by savages and by the children of civilised races (who practically *are* savages mentally, if not morally). The Ainos, that odd, bear-worshipping race in Japan, use the child's release; so do some American Indians.

The *secondary* release is used by Zunis (New Mexico), the race of the Rattlesnake Mysteries.

The Sioux and similar American tribes have the *Tertiary* release, and so have the remote backward Mincopies of the Andamans, who (according to Mr. Mann) cannot light a fire.

The savages who use the *Mediterranean release* are the Eskimos and the *Little Andaman Islanders.* It is a very vital thing that this most backward and isolated people should draw the bow as civilised people draw it, while no other savages do so except the Eskimo, who *may* have learned the style from the Northmen. Chinese, Turks, Japanese, and Persians (who are not Mongolian of course) use the queer Mongolian release.

Of civilised peoples, the Assyrians appear first to have used the *child's* or *primary* release, developing later the *secondary,* and, finally, the *Mediterranean.*

This minute point is worthy of the attention of travellers, before bows and arrows become as extinct as the Dodo.

* * *

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

'Eheu fugaces, Postmane, Postmane!'

My postman, though I fear thy tread,
  And tremble as thy foot draws nearer,
'Tis not the Christmas Dun I dread,
  My mortal foe is much severer,—
The Unknown Correspondent, who,
  With indefatigable pen,
And nothing in the world to do,
  Perplexes literary men.

From Pentecost and Ponder's End
  They write: from Deal, and from Dacotah,
The people of the Shetlands send
  No inconsiderable quota;
They write for *autographs*; in vain,
  In vain does Phyllis write, and Flora,
They write that 'Allan Quatermain'
  Is not at all the book for Brora.[1]

They write to say that 'they have met'
  This writer 'at a garden party,
And though,' this writer '*may* forget,'
  Their recollection's keen and hearty.
'And will you praise in *your* reviews
  A novel by our distant cousin?'
These letters from Provincial Blues
  Assail us daily by the dozen!

Oh friends with time upon your hands,
  Oh friends with postage-stamps in plenty,
Oh poets out of many lands,
  Oh youths and maidens under twenty,
Seek out some other wretch to bore,
  Or wreak yourselves upon your neighbours,
And leave me to my dusty lore
  And my unprofitable labours!

* * *

It is little enough, apparently, that anyone can do, by individual effort, for the class of sewing women. Their labour is so cheap—because it is so abundant, and because they have not yet found the means of co-operation—that their condition is one of the worst sorrows of these times. In their behalf a Co-operative Society, still on a very small scale, has, however, been organised. Everyone who wishes to make their life a little less like mere starvation can help by sending work, or orders for work, to the Co-operative Needlewomen's Society, 34 Brooke Street, Holborn. An account of the Society, its objects and methods, will

[1] Brora, believed to be a *clachan* near Cape Wrath, whence an inhabitant, perhaps the Only Inhabitant, writes to the editor, to denounce the author of *She*, in a very pleasing strain of Caledonian invective.

be found among the advertisements at the end of this number of LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE. Mr. Walter Besant has expressed to the editor his belief that this Society is doing good work, and those who were interested in 'Children of Gibeon' have here a chance of helping forward one of the objects for which that book was written.

ANDREW LANG.

The 'Donna.'

THE EDITOR begs to acknowledge the receipt of the following subscriptions to the 'Donna.' Amounts received after Jan. 10 will be acknowledged in the March number. Leland Noel 3*l.* V. M. 1*l.* Jean 5*s.* B. G. W. 5*s.* E C. 1*l.* Miss Elliot 10*s.* (Donna), 1*l.* (Sisters' Workroom). Hon. Lady Elliot, 1*l.* (Donna), 1*l.* (Workroom). F. F. H. 10*s.* Higgins 5*l.* J. P. P. 1*l.* A. H. B., Bayswater, 1*l.* Miss Churchill 1*l.* C. C. 5*s.* Dr. Slous 1*l.* 10*s.* Col. Meyrick 10*s.* B. 5*s.* An Old Blue 1*l.* W. R. Smales 10*s.* E. M. 1*l.* 1*s.* E. C. M. 1*l.* 1*s.* F. and C. M. 1*s.* Mrs. Ellis 1*l.* Y. A. 10*s.* Aurora 2*s.* 6*d.* F. and C. Edis 5*s* Edward Rourke 10*s.* A. C. 1*s.* J. S. L. 5*s.* Walkeringham, Christmas Day 7*s.* C. H. Hawkins 2*l.* 2*s.* Two Kent nut trees 1*l.* 15*s.* Mrs. Cleasby 2*l.* B. K. 1*l.* C. R. 1*s.* Aba 2*s.* 6*d.* F. N. L. 2*l.* 2*s.* Mrs. Chalk 2*l.* 2*s.* J. A. W. 1*l.* Collected by A. K. L. 2*l.* Hollington, Beckenham, 5*s.* Mrs. Longman 2*l.* M. Gripper 1*l.* E. B. 2*s.* 6*d.* S. A. A. 10*l.* C. M. Y. 10*s.* Edith 5*s.* W. H. Newnham 1*l.* Jean 10*s.* Gen. Sir Beauchamp Walker 10*s.* Miss May's Sunday Class 21*s.* Two Sisters 2*l.* L. C. 10*s.* H. P. 5*l.* 5*s.* A. 10*s.* (Donna), 10*s.* (Don). Miss Walker, 1*l.* 10*s.* (Donna), 1*l.* 10*s.* (Don). J. Kemp Welch, 1*l.* Miss L. Aldridge 1*l.* Mrs. Henry Moore 10*s.* Miss Moore 10*s.* J. D. Somers 2*l.* 2*s.* F. Guedalla 3*l.* 10*s.* L. L. A. 5*s.* Miss Gill 5*s.* (Donna), 5*s.* (Don). James Solly, 10*s.* F. L. 4*s.* E. S. B. and A. E. B., Cardiff, 10*s.* Kathleen 2*s.* E. 10*s.* L. G., Brighton, 1*l.* E. L. B. 10*s.* Major C. Hawkins Fisher 10*s.* M. F. W. 5*l.* Bartie Wood, 1*s.* N. L. 1*s.* 6*d.* E. K. 5*s.* A. C. C. 1*l.* G. B. 5*s.* Mrs. J. Parish 10*s.* (for the Sisters' Workroom).

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NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Editor requests that his correspondents will be good enough to write to him informing him of the subject of any article they wish to offer, before sending the MS. A stamped and addressed envelope should accompany the MS. if the writer wishes it to be returned in case of non-acceptance. The Editor can in no case hold himself responsible for accidental loss.

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'A kiss when my bath is over,
A kiss when my bath begins;
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MARCH 1887.

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BEING AN ACCOUNT OF HIS

FURTHER ADVENTURES AND DISCOVERIES IN COMPANY WITH SIR HENRY CURTIS, BART., COMMANDER JOHN GOOD, R.N., AND ONE UMSLOPOGAAS.

BY H. RIDER HAGGARD, AUTHOR OF 'SHE,' 'KING SOLOMON'S MINES,' &c.

Ex Africa semper aliquid novi.

CHAPTER VII.

A SLAUGHTER GRIM AND GREAT.

THEN came a pause, and we stood there in the chilly silent darkness waiting till the moment came to start. It was, perhaps, the most trying time of all—that slow, slow quarter of an hour. The minutes seemed to drag along with leaden feet, and the quiet, the solemn hush, that brooded over all—big, as it were with a coming fate, was most oppressive to the spirits. I once remember having to get up before dawn to see a man hanged, and I then went through a very similar set of sensations, only in the present instance my feelings were animated by that more vivid and personal element which naturally appertains rather to the person to be operated on than to the most sympathetic spectator. The solemn faces of the men, well aware that the short passage of an hour would mean for some, and perhaps all of them the last great passage to the unknown or oblivion; the bated whispers in which they spoke; even Sir Henry's continuous and

thoughtful examination of his woodcutter's axe and the fidgety way in which Good kept polishing his eyeglass all told the same tale of nerves stretched pretty nigh to breaking point. Only Umslopogaas, leaning as usual upon Inkosi-kaas and taking an occasional pinch of snuff, was to all appearance perfectly and completely unmoved. Nothing could touch his iron nerves.

The moon went down, for a long while she had been getting nearer and nearer to the horizon, now she finally sank and left the world in darkness save for a faint grey tinge in the Eastern sky that palely heralded the coming dawn.

Mr. Mackenzie stood, watch in hand, his wife clinging to his arm and striving to stifle her sobs.

'Twenty minutes to four,' he said, 'it ought to be light enough to attack at twenty minutes past four. Captain Good had better be moving, he will want three or four minutes' start.'

Good gave one final polish to his eyeglass, nodded to us in a jocular sort of way—which I could not help feeling it must have cost him something to muster up—and, ever polite, took off his steel-lined cap to Mrs. Mackenzie and started for his position at the head of the kraal, to reach which he had to make a detour by some paths known to the natives.

Just then one of the boys came in and reported that everybody in the Masai camp, with the exception of the two sentries who were walking up and down in front of the respective entrances, appeared to be fast asleep. Then the rest of us took the road. First came the guide, then Sir Henry, Umslopogaas, the Wakwafi Askari, and Mr. Mackenzie's two mission natives armed with long spears and shields. I followed immediately after with Alphonse and five natives all armed with guns, and Mr. Mackenzie brought up the rear with the six remaining natives.

The cattle kraal where the Masai were camped lay at the foot of the hill on which the house stood, or, roughly speaking, about eight hundred yards from the Mission buildings. The first five hundred yards of this distance we traversed quietly indeed, but at a good pace; after that we crept on as silently as a leopard on his prey, gliding like ghosts from bush to bush and stone to stone. When I had gone a little way I chanced to look behind me, and saw the redoubtable Alphonse staggering along with white face and trembling knees, and his rifle, which was at full cock, pointed directly at the small of my back. Having halted and carefully put the rifle at 'safety,' we started again, and all went well till we

were within one hundred yards or so of the kraal, when his teeth began to chatter in the most aggressive way.

'If you don't stop that I will kill you,' I whispered savagely; for the idea of having all our lives sacrificed to a tooth-chattering French cook was too much for me. I began to fear that he would betray us, and heartily wished we had left him behind.

'But, monsieur, I cannot help it,' he answered; 'it is the cold.'

Here was a dilemma, but fortunately I devised a plan. In the pocket of the coat I had on was a small piece of dirty rag that I had used some time before to clean a gun with. 'Put this in your mouth,' I whispered again, giving him the rag; 'and if I hear another sound you are a dead man.' I knew that that would stifle the clatter of his ivories. I must have looked as if I meant what I said, for he instantly obeyed me and continued his journey with an oily corner of rag hanging down his chin.

Then we crept on again.

At last we were within fifty yards of the kraal. Between us and it was an open space of sloping grass with only one mimosa bush and a couple of tussocks of a sort of thistle for cover. We were still hidden in fairly thick bush. It was beginning to grow light. The stars had paled and a kind of sickly gleam played about the east and was reflected on the earth. We could see the outline of the kraal clearly enough, and could also make out the faint glimmer of the dying embers of the Masai camp fires. We halted and watched, for the sentry we knew was posted at the opening. Presently he appeared, a fine tall fellow, walking idly up and down within five paces of the thorn-stopped entrance. We had hoped to catch him napping, but it was not to be. He seemed particularly wide awake. If we could not kill that man, and kill him silently, we were lost. There we crouched and watched him. Presently Umslopogaas, who was a few paces ahead of me, turned and made a sign, and next second I saw him go down on his stomach like a snake, and taking an opportunity when the sentry's head was turned, begin to work his way through the grass without a sound.

The unconscious sentry commenced to hum a little tune, and Umslopogaas crept on. He reached the shelter of the mimosa bush unperceived and there waited. Still the sentry walked up and down. Presently he turned and looked over the wall into the camp. Instantly the human snake who was stalking him glided on ten yards and got behind one of the tussocks of the thistle-like plant, reaching it as the Elmoran turned again. As he

turned his eye fell upon this patch of thistles and it seemed to strike him that it did not look quite right. He advanced a pace towards it—halted, yawned, stooped down, picked up a little pebble and threw it at it. It hit Umslopogaas upon the head, luckily not upon the armour-shirt. Had it done so the clink would have betrayed us. Luckily, too, the shirt was browned and not bright steel which would certainly have been detected. Apparently satisfied that there was nothing wrong he then gave over his investigations and contented himself with leaning on his spear and standing gazing idly at the tuft. For at least three minutes did he stand thus, plunged apparently in a gentle reverie, and there we lay in the last extremity of anxiety, expecting every moment that we should be discovered or that some untoward accident would happen. I could hear Alphonse's teeth going like anything on the oiled rag, and turning my head round made an awful face at him. But I am bound to state that my own heart was at much the same game as the Frenchman's castanets, while the perspiration was pouring from my body, causing the wash-leather-lined shirt to stick to me unpleasantly, and altogether I was in the pitiable state known by schoolboys as a 'blue funk.'

At last the ordeal came to an end. The sentry glanced at the east, and appeared to note with satisfaction that his period of duty was coming to an end—as indeed it was, once and for all—for he rubbed his hands and began to walk again briskly, to warm himself.

The moment his back was turned the long black snake glided on again, and reached the other thistle tuft, which was within a couple of paces of his return beat.

Back came the sentry and strolled right past the tuft, utterly unconscious of the presence that was crouching behind it. Had he looked down he could scarcely have failed to see, but he did not do so.

He passed, and then his hidden enemy erected himself, and with outstretched hand followed in his tracks.

A moment more, and, just as the Elmoran was about to turn, the great Zulu made a spring, and in the growing light we could see the long lean hands close round the Masai's throat. Then followed a convulsive twining of the two dark bodies, and in another second I saw the Masai's head bent back, and heard a sharp crack, something like that of a dry twig snapping, and he fell down upon the ground, his limbs moving spasmodically.

Umslopogaas had put out all his iron strength and broken the warrior's neck.

For a moment he knelt upon his victim, still gripping his throat till he was sure that there was nothing more to fear from him, and then he rose and beckoned to us to advance, which we did on all fours, like a colony of huge apes. On reaching the kraal we saw that the Masai had still further choked this entrance, which was about ten feet wide—no doubt in order to guard against attack—by dragging four or five tops of mimosa trees up to it. So much the better for us, I reflected; the more obstruction there was the slower would they be able to come through. Here we separated; Mackenzie and his party creeping up under the shadow of the wall to the left, while Sir Henry and Umslopogaas took their stations one on each side of the thorn fence, the two spearmen and the Askari lying down in front of it. I and my men crept on up the right side of the kraal, which was about fifty paces long.

When I was two-thirds up I halted, and placed my men at distances of four paces from one another, keeping Alphonse close to me, however. Then I peeped for the first time over the wall. It was getting fairly light now, and the first thing I saw was the white donkey, exactly opposite to me, and close by it I could make out little Flossie's pale face, sitting as the lad had described, some ten paces from the wall. Round her lay many warriors, sleeping. At distances all over the surface of the kraal were the remains of fires, round each of which slept some five-and-twenty Masai, for the most part gorged with food. Now and then a man would raise himself, yawn, and look at the east, which had now turned primrose; but none got up. I determined to wait another five minutes, both to allow the light to increase, so that we could make better shooting, and to give Good and his party—of whom I could see or hear nothing—every opportunity to make ready.

The quiet dawn commenced to throw her ever-widening mantle over plain and forest and river—mighty Kenia, wrapped in the silence of eternal snows, looked out across the earth—till presently a beam from the unrisen sun lit upon his heaven-kissing crest and purpled it with blood; the sky above grew blue, and tender as a mother's smile; a bird began to pipe his morning song, and a little breeze passing through the bush shook down the dewdrops in millions to refresh the waking world. Everywhere was peace and the happiness of arising strength, everywhere save in the heart of cruel man!

Suddenly, just as I was nerving myself for the signal, having already selected my man on whom I meant to open fire—a great fellow sprawling on the ground within three feet of little Flossie—Alphonse's teeth began to chatter again like the hoofs of a galloping giraffe, making a great noise in the silence. His rag had dropped out in the agitation of his mind. Instantly a Masai within three paces of us woke, and, sitting up, gazed about him, looking for the cause of the sound. Moved beyond myself, I brought the butt-end of my rifle down on to the pit of the Frenchman's stomach. This stopped his chattering; but, as he doubled up, he managed to let off his gun in such a manner that the bullet passed within an inch of my head.

There was no need for a signal now. From both sides of the kraal broke out a waving line of fire, in which I myself joined, managing with a snap shot to knock over my Masai by Flossie, just as he was jumping up. Then from the top end of the kraal there rang an awful yell, in which I rejoiced to recognise Good's piercing note rising clear and shrill above the din, and in another second followed such a scene as I have never seen before nor shall again. With an universal howl of terror and fury the brawny crowd of savages within the kraal sprang to their feet, many of them to fall again beneath our well-directed hail of lead before they had moved a yard. For a moment they stood undecided, and then hearing the cries and curses that rose unceasingly from the top end of the kraal, and bewildered by the storm of bullets, they as by one impulse rushed down towards the thorn-stopped entrance. As they went we kept pouring our fire with terrible effect into the thickening mob as fast as we could load. I had emptied my repeater of the ten shots it contained and was just beginning to slip in some more when I bethought me of little Flossie. Looking up, I saw that the white donkey was lying kicking, having been knocked over either by one of our bullets or a Masai spear-thrust. There were no living Masai near, but the black nurse was on her feet and with a spear cutting the rope that bound Flossie's feet. Next second she ran to the wall of the kraal and began to climb over it, an example which the little girl followed. But Flossie was evidently very stiff and cramped, and could only go slowly, and as she went two Masai flying down the kraal caught sight of her and rushed towards her to kill her. The first fellow came up just as the poor little girl, after a desperate effort to climb the wall, fell back into the kraal. Up flashed the great spear, and as it did so a bullet from my rifle

found its home in the holder's ribs, and over he went like a shot rabbit. But behind him was the other man, and, alas, I had only that one cartridge in the magazine! Flossie had scrambled to her feet and was facing the second man, who was advancing with raised spear. I turned my head aside and felt sick as death. I could not bear to see him stab her. Glancing up again, to my surprise I saw the Masai's spear lying on the ground, while the man himself was staggering about with both hands to his head. Suddenly I saw a puff of smoke, proceeding apparently from Flossie, and the man fell down headlong. Then I remembered the Derringer pistol she carried, and saw that she had fired both barrels of it at him, thereby saving her life. In another instant she had made an effort, and assisted by the nurse, who was lying on the top, had scrambled over the wall, and I knew that she was, comparatively speaking, safe.

All this takes some time to tell, but I do not suppose that it took more than fifteen seconds to enact. I soon got the magazine of the repeater filled again with cartridges, and once more opened fire, not on the seething black mass which was gathering at the end of the kraal, but on fugitives who bethought them to climb the wall. I picked off several of these men, moving down towards the end of the kraal as I did so, and arriving at the corner, or rather the bend of the oval, in time to see, and by means of my rifle to assist in, the mighty struggle that took place there.

By this time some two hundred Masai—allowing that we had up to the present accounted for fifty—had gathered together in front of the thorn-stopped entrance, driven thither by the spears of Good's men, whom they doubtless supposed were a large force instead of being but ten strong. For some reason it never occurred to them to try and rush the wall, which they could have scrambled over with comparative ease; they all made for the fence, which was really a strongly interwoven fortification. With a bound the first warrior went at it, and even before he touched the ground on the other side I saw Sir Henry's great axe swing up and fall with awful force upon his feather head-piece, and he sank into the middle of the thorns. Then with a yell and a crash they began to break through somehow, and ever as they came the great axe swung and Inkosi-kaas flashed and they fell dead one by one, each man thus helping to build up a barrier against his fellows. Those who escaped the axes of the pair fell at the hands of the Askari and the two Mission Kafirs, and those who

passed scatheless from them were brought low by my own and Mackenzie's fire.

Faster and more furious grew the fighting. Single Masai would spring upon the dead bodies of their comrades, and engage one or other of the axemen with their long spears; but, thanks chiefly to the mail shirts, the result was always the same. Presently there was a great swing of the axe, a sound of crashing bones, and another dead Masai. That is, if the man was engaged with Sir Henry. If it was Umslopogaas that he fought with the result indeed would be the same, but it would be differently attained. It was but rarely that the Zulu used the crashing double-handed stroke; on the contrary, he did little more than tap continually at his adversary's head, pecking at it with the pole-axe end of the axe as a woodpecker[1] pecks at rotten wood. Presently a peck would go home, and his enemy would drop down with a neat little circular hole in his forehead or skull, exactly similar to that which a cheese-scoop makes in a cheese. He never used the broad blade of the axe except when hard pressed, or when striking at a shield. He told me afterwards that he did not consider it sportsmanlike.

Good and his men were quite close by now, and our people had to cease firing into the mass for fear of killing some of them (as it was, one of them was slain in this way). Mad and desperate with fear, the Masai by a frantic effort burst through the thorn fence and piled-up dead, and, sweeping Curtis, Umslopogaas, and the other three before them, broke into the open. And now it was that we began to lose men fast. Down went our poor Askari who was armed with the axe, a great spear standing out a foot behind his back; and before long the two spearsmen who had stood with him went down too, dying fighting like tigers; and others of our party shared their fate. For a moment I feared the fight was lost—certainly it trembled in the balance. I shouted to my men to cast down their rifles, and to take spears and throw themselves into the *mêlée*. They obeyed, their blood being now thoroughly up, and Mr. Mackenzie's people followed their example.

This move had a momentary good result, but still the fight hung in the balance.

Our people fought magnificently, hurling themselves upon the

[1] As I think I have already said, one of Umslopogaas's Zulu names was the 'Woodpecker.' I could never make out why he was called so until I saw him in action with Inkosi-kaas, when I at once recognised the resemblance.—A.Q.

dark mass of Elmoran, hewing, thrusting, slaying, and being slain. And ever above the din rose Good's awful yell of encouragement as he plunged, eyeglass and all, to wherever the fight was thickest; and ever, with an almost machine-like regularity, the two axes rose and fell, carrying death and disablement at every stroke. But I could see that the strain was beginning to tell upon Sir Henry, who was bleeding from several flesh wounds: his breath was coming in gasps, and the veins stood out on his forehead like blue and knotted cords. Even Umslopogaas, man of iron that he was, was hard pressed. I noticed that he had given up 'woodpecking,' and was now using the broad blade of Inkosikaas, 'browning' his enemy wherever he could hit him, instead of drilling scientific holes in his head. I myself did not go into the *mêlée*, but hovered outside like the swift 'back' in a football scrimmage, putting a bullet through a Masai whenever I got a chance. I was more use so. I fired forty-nine cartridges that morning, and I did not miss many shots.

Presently, do as we would, the beam of the balance began to rise against us. We had not more than fifteen or sixteen effectives left now, and the Masai had at least fifty. Of course if they had kept their heads, and shaken themselves together, they could soon have made an end of the matter; but that is just what they did not do, not having yet recovered from their start, and some of them having actually fled from their sleeping-places without their weapons. Still by now many individuals were fighting with their normal courage and discretion, and this alone was sufficient to defeat us. To make matters worse just then, when Mackenzie's rifle was empty, a brawny savage armed with a 'sime' or sword, made a rush for him. The clergyman flung down his gun, and drawing his huge carver from his elastic belt (his revolver had dropped out in the fight), they closed in desperate struggle. It really was a sight to see that good but angular man go in—coat-tails, broad-brimmed hat, carving-knife, and all. They say that nobody is so bitter as an apostate, so, on the same principle, for fighting purposes at a pinch commend me to a man of peace. At any rate, Mackenzie's play with the carving-knife was something beautiful, though I fear that the Society of Friends would not have approved of this way of 'converting the heathen.' Presently, locked in a close embrace, missionary and Masai rolled on to the ground behind the wall, and for some time I, being amply occupied with my own affairs, and in keeping my skin from

being pricked, remained in ignorance of his fate or how the duel had ended.

To and fro surged the fight, slowly turning round like the vortex of a human whirlpool, and things began to look very bad for us. Just then, however, a fortunate thing happened. Umslopogaas, either by accident or design, broke out of the ring and engaged a warrior at some few paces from it. As he did so, another man ran up and struck him with all his force between the shoulders with his great spear, which, falling on the tough steel shirt, failed to pierce it and rebounded. For a moment the man stared aghast—protective armour being unknown among these tribes—and then he yelled out at the top of his voice—

'*They are devils—bewitched, bewitched!*' And seized by a sudden panic, he threw down his spear, and began to fly. I cut short his career with a bullet, and Umslopogaas brained his man, and then the panic spread to the others.

'*Bewitched, bewitched!*' they cried, and tried to escape in every direction, utterly demoralised and broken-spirited, for the most part even throwing down their shields and spears.

On the last scene of that dreadful fight I need not dwell. It was a slaughter great and grim, in which no quarter was asked or given. One incident, however, is worth detailing. Just as I was hoping that it was all done with, suddenly from under a heap of slain where he had been hiding, an unwounded warrior sprang up, and, clearing the piles of dying and dead like an antelope, sped like the wind up the kraal towards the spot where I was standing at the moment. But he was not alone, for Umslopogaas came gliding on his tracks with the peculiar swallow-like motion for which he was noted, and as they neared me, I recognised in the Masai the herald of the previous night. Finding that, run as he would, his pursuer was gaining on him, the man halted and turned round to give battle. Umslopogaas also pulled up.

'Ah, ah,' he cried, in mockery, to the Elmoran, 'it is thou whom I talked with last night—the Lygonani, the Herald, the capturer of little girls—he who would kill a little girl. And thou didst hope to stand man to man and face to face with an Induna of the tribe of the Maquilisini, of the people of the Amazulu? Behold, thy prayer is granted! And I did swear to hew thee limb from limb, thou insolent dog. Behold, I will do it even now!'

The Masai ground his teeth with fury, and charged at the Zulu with his spear. As he came, Umslopogaas deftly stepped aside, and swinging Inkosi-kaas high above his head with both

hands, brought the broad blade down with such fearful force from behind upon the Masai's shoulder just where the neck is set into the frame, that its razor edge shore right through bone and flesh and muscle, almost severing the head and one arm from the body.

'*Ou!*' ejaculated Umslopogaas, contemplating the corpse of his foe; 'I have kept my word. It was a good stroke.'

CHAPTER VIII.

ALPHONSE EXPLAINS.

AND so the fight was ended. On turning from this shocking scene it suddenly struck me that I had seen nothing of Alphonse since the moment, some twenty minutes before—for though this fight has taken a long while to describe, it did not take long in reality—when I had been forced to hit him in the wind with the result of nearly getting myself shot. Fearing that the poor little man had perished in the battle I began to hunt about among the dead for his body, but, not being able either to see or hear anything of it, I concluded that he must have survived, and walked down the side of the kraal where we had first taken our stand, calling him by name. Now some fifteen paces back from the kraal wall stood a very ancient tree of the banyan species. So ancient was it, that all the inside had in the course of ages decayed away, leaving nothing but a shell of bark.

'Alphonse,' I called, as I walked down the wall, 'Alphonse!'

'Oui, monsieur,' answered a voice. 'Here am I.'

I looked round but could see nobody. 'Where?' I cried.

'Here am I, monsieur, in the tree.'

I looked, and there, peering out of a hole in the trunk of the banyan about five feet from the ground, I saw a pale face and a pair of large mustachios, one clipped short and the other as lamentably out of curl as the tail of a newly whipped pug. Then, for the first time, I realised what I had suspected before—namely, that Alphonse was an arrant coward. I walked up to him. 'Come out of that hole,' I said.

'Is it finished, monsieur?' he asked anxiously; 'quite finished? Ah, the horrors I have undergone, and the prayers I have uttered!'

'Come out, you little skunk,' I said, for I did not feel amiable; 'it is all over.'

'So, monsieur, then my prayers have prevailed? I emerge,' and he did.

As we were walking down together to join the others, who were gathered in a group by the wide entrance to the kraal, which now resembled a veritable charnel-house, a Masai, who had escaped so far and been hiding under a bush, suddenly sprang up and charged furiously at us. Off went Alphonse with a howl of terror, and after him flew the Masai, bent upon doing some execution before he died. He soon overtook the poor little Frenchman, and would have finished him then and there had I not, just as Alphonse made a last agonised double in the vain hope of avoiding the yard of steel that was flashing in his immediate rear, managed to plant a bullet between the Elmoran's broad shoulders, which brought matters to a satisfactory conclusion so far as the Frenchman was concerned. But just then he tripped and fell flat, and the body of the Masai fell right on the top of him, moving convulsively in the death struggle. Thereupon there arose such a series of piercing howls that I concluded that before he died the savage must have managed to skewer poor Alphonse. I ran up in a hurry and pulled the Masai off, and there beneath him lay Alphonse covered with blood and jerking himself about like a galvanised frog. Poor fellow! thought I, he is done for, and kneeling down by him I began to search for his wound as well as his struggles would allow.

'Oh, the hole in my back!' he yelled. 'I am murdered. I am dead. Oh, Annette!'

I searched again, but could see no wound. Then the truth dawned on me—the man was frightened, not hurt.

'Get up,' I shouted, 'get up. Aren't you ashamed of yourself? You are not touched.'

Thereupon he rose, not a penny the worse. 'But, monsieur, I thought I was,' he said apologetically; 'I did not know that I had conquered.' Then, giving the body of the Masai a kick, he ejaculated triumphantly, 'Ah, dog of a black savage, thou art dead; what victory!'

Thoroughly disgusted, I left Alphonse to look after himself, which he did by following me like a shadow, and proceeded to join the others by the large entrance. The first thing that I saw was Mackenzie, seated on a stone with a handkerchief twisted round his thigh, from which he was bleeding freely, having, indeed, received a spear-thrust that passed right through it, and still holding in his hand his favourite carving-knife now covered

with blood and bent nearly double, from which I gathered that he had been successful in his rough and tumble with the Elmoran.

'Ah, Quatermain!' he sang out in a trembling, excited voice, 'so we have conquered; but it is a sorry sight, a sorry sight;' and then breaking into broad Scotch and glancing at the bent knife in his hand, 'It greets me sair to hae bent my best carver on the breast-bane of a savage,' and he laughed hysterically. Poor fellow, what between his wound and the killing excitement he had undergone his nerves were much shaken, and no wonder! It is hard upon a man of peace and kindly heart to be called upon to join in such a gruesome business. But there, fate puts us sometimes into very ironical positions!

At the kraal entrance the scene was a strange one. The slaughter was over by now, and the wounded men had been put out of their pain, for no quarter had been given. The bush-closed entrance was trampled flat, and in place of bushes it was filled with the bodies of dead men. Dead men, everywhere dead men—they lay about in knots, they were flung by ones and twos in every position upon the open spaces, for all the world like the people on the grass in one of the London parks on a particularly hot Sunday in August. In front of this entrance, on a space which had been cleared of dead and of the shields and spears which were scattered in all directions as they had fallen or been thrown from the hands of their owners, stood and lay the survivors of the awful struggle, and at their feet were four wounded men. We had gone into the fight thirty strong, and of the thirty but fifteen remained alive, and five of them (including Mr. Mackenzie) were wounded, two mortally. Of those who held the entrance, Curtis and the Zulu alone remained. Good had lost five men killed, I had lost two killed, and Mackenzie no less than five out of the six with him. As for the survivors they were, with the exception of myself who had never come to close quarters, red from head to foot—Sir Henry's armour might have been painted that colour—and utterly exhausted, except Umslopogaas, who, as he stood on a little mound above a heap of dead, leaning as usual upon his axe, did not seem particularly distressed, although the skin over the hole in his head palpitated violently.

'Ah, Macumazahn!' he said to me as I limped up, feeling very sick, 'I told thee that it would be a good fight, and it has. Never have I seen a better, or one more bravely fought. As for this iron shirt, surely it is "tagati" [bewitched]; nothing could pierce it.

Had it not been for the garment I should have been *there*,' and he nodded towards the great pile of dead men beneath him.

'I give it thee; thou art a gallant man,' said Sir Henry, briefly.

'Koos!' answered the Zulu, deeply pleased both at the gift and the compliment. 'Thou, too, Incubu, didst bear thyself as a man, but I must give thee some lessons with the axe; thou dost waste thy strength.'

Just then Mackenzie asked about Flossie, and we were all greatly relieved when one of the men said he had seen her flying towards the house with the nurse. Then bearing such of the wounded as could be moved at the moment with us, we slowly made our way towards the Mission-house, spent with toil and bloodshed, but with the glorious sense of victory against overwhelming odds glowing in our hearts. We had saved the life of the little maid, and taught the Masai of those parts a lesson that they will not forget for ten years—but at what a cost!

Painfully we made our way up the hill which, but a little more than an hour before, we had descended under such different circumstances. At the gate of the wall stood Mrs. Mackenzie waiting for us. When her eyes fell upon us, however, she shrieked out, and covered her face with her hands, crying, 'Horrible, horrible!' Nor were her fears allayed when she discovered her worthy husband being borne upon an improvised stretcher; but her doubts as to the nature of his injury were soon set at rest. Then when in a few brief words I had told her the upshot of the struggle (of which Flossie, who had arrived in safety, had been able to explain something) she came up to me and solemnly kissed me on the forehead.

'God bless you all, Mr. Quatermain; you have saved my child's life,' she said simply.

Then we went in and got our clothes off and doctored our wounds; I am glad to say I had none, and Sir Henry's and Good's were, thanks to those invaluable chain shirts, of a comparatively harmless nature, and to be dealt with by means of a few stitches and sticking-plaster. Mackenzie's, however, was serious, though fortunately the spear had not severed any large artery. After that we had a bath, and oh, what a luxury it was! and having clad ourselves in ordinary clothes, proceeded to the dining-room, where breakfast was set as usual. It was curious sitting down there, drinking tea and eating toast in an ordinary nineteenth-century sort of a way just as though we had not employed the early hours

in a regular primitive hand-to-hand middle-ages kind of struggle. As Good said, the whole thing seemed more as though one had had a bad nightmare just before being called, than as a deed done. When we were finishing our breakfast the door opened, and in came little Flossie, very pale and tottery, but quite unhurt. She kissed us all and thanked us. I congratulated her on the presence of mind she had shown in shooting the Masai with her Derringer pistol, and thereby saving her own life.

'Oh, don't talk of it!' she said, beginning to cry hysterically; 'I shall never forget his face as he went turning round and round, never—I can see it now.'

I advised her to go to bed and get some sleep, which she did, and awoke in the evening quite recovered, so far as her strength was concerned. It struck me as an odd thing that a girl who could find the nerve to shoot a huge black ruffian rushing to kill her with a spear should have been so affected at the thought of it afterwards; but it is, after all, characteristic of the sex. Poor Flossie! I fear that her nerves will not get over that night in the Masai camp for many a long year. She told me afterwards that it was the suspense that was so awful, having to sit there hour after hour through the livelong night utterly ignorant as to whether or no any attempt was to be made to rescue her. She said that on the whole she did not expect it, knowing how few there were of us, and how many of the Masai—who, by the way, came continually to stare at her, most of them never having seen a white person before, and handled her arms and hair with their filthy paws. She said also that she had made up her mind that if she saw no signs of succour by the time the first rays of the rising sun reached the kraal she would kill herself with the pistol, for the nurse had heard the Lygonani say that they were to be tortured to death as soon as the sun was up if one of the white men did not come in their place. It was an awful resolution to have to take, but she meant to act on it, and I have little doubt but what she would have done so. Although she was at an age when in England girls are in the schoolroom and come down to dessert, this 'daughter of the wilderness' had more courage, discretion, and power of mind than many a woman of mature age nurtured in idleness and luxury, with minds carefully drilled and educated out of any originality or self-resource that nature may have endowed them with.

When breakfast was over we all turned in and had a good sleep, only getting up in time for dinner; after which meal we

once more adjourned, together with all the available population—men, women, youths, and girls—to the scene of the morning's slaughter, our object being to bury our own dead and get rid of the Masai by flinging them into the Tana River, which ran within fifty yards of the kraal. On reaching the spot we disturbed thousands upon thousands of vultures and a sort of brown bush eagle, which had been flocking to the feast from miles and miles away. Often have I watched these great and repulsive birds, and marvelled at the extraordinary speed with which they arrive on a scene of slaughter. A buck falls to your rifle, and within a minute high in the blue ether appears a speck that gradually grows into a vulture, then another, and another. I have heard many theories advanced to account for the wonderful power of perception nature has given these birds. My own, founded on a good deal of observation, is that the vultures, gifted as they are with powers of sight greater than those given by the most powerful glass, quarter out the heavens among themselves, and hanging in mid-air at a vast height—probably from two to three miles above the earth—keep watch, each of them, over an enormous stretch of country. Presently one of them spies food, and instantly begins to sink towards it. Thereon his next neighbour in the airy heights sailing leisurely through the blue gulf, at a distance perhaps of some miles, follows his example, knowing that food has been sighted. Down he goes, and all the vultures within sight of him follow after, and so do all those in sight of them. In this way the vultures for twenty miles round can be summoned to the feast in a few minutes.

We buried our dead in solemn silence, Good being selected to read the Burial Service over them (in the absence of Mr. Mackenzie, confined to bed), as he was generally allowed to possess the best voice and most impressive manner. It was melancholy in the extreme, but, as Good said, it might have been worse, for we might have had 'to bury ourselves.' I pointed out that this would have been a difficult feat, but I knew what he meant.

Next we set to work to load an ox-waggon which had been brought round from the Mission with the dead bodies of the Masai, having first collected the spears, shields, and other arms. We loaded the waggon five times, about fifty bodies to the load, and emptied it into the Tana. From this it was evident that very few of the Masai could have escaped. The crocodiles must have been well fed that night. One of the last bodies we picked up was that of the sentry at the upper end. I asked Good how he

managed to kill him, and he told me that he had crept up much as Umslopogaas had done, and stabbed him with his sword. He groaned a good deal, but fortunately nobody heard him. As Good said, it was a horrible thing to have to do, and most unpleasantly like cold-blooded murder.

And so with the last body that floated away down the current of the Tana ended the incident of our attack on the Masai camp. The spears and shields and other arms we took up to the Mission, where they filled an outhouse. One incident, however, I must not forget to mention. As we were returning from performing the obsequies of our Masai friends we passed the hollow tree where Alphonse had secreted himself in the morning. It so happened that the little man himself was with us assisting in our unpleasant task with a far better will than he had shown where live Masai were concerned. Indeed, for each body that he handled he found an appropriate sarcasm. Alphonse throwing dead Masai into the Tana was a very different creature from Alphonse flying for dear life from the spear of a live Masai. He was quite merry and gay, was this volatile child of France; he clapped his hands and warbled snatches of French songs as the grim dead warriors went 'splash' into the running waters to carry a message of death and defiance to their kindred a hundred miles below. In short, thinking that he wanted taking down a peg, I suggested holding a court-martial on him for his conduct in the morning.

Accordingly we brought him to the tree where he had hidden, and proceeded to sit in judgment on him, Sir Henry explaining to him in the very best French the unheard-of cowardice and enormity of his conduct, more especially in letting the oiled rag out of his mouth, whereby he nearly aroused the Masai camp with teeth-chattering and brought about the failure of our plans: ending up with a request for an explanation.

But if we expected to find Alphonse at a loss and put him to open shame we were destined to be disappointed. He bowed and scraped and smiled, and acknowledged that his conduct might at first blush appear strange, but really it was not, inasmuch as his teeth were chattering not from fear — oh, dear no! oh, certainly not! he marvelled how the 'messieurs' could think of such a thing—but from the chill air of the morning. As for the rag, if monsieur could have but tasted its evil flavour, being compounded indeed of a mixture of stale paraffin oil, grease, and gunpowder, monsieur himself would have spat it out. But he did

nothing of the sort; he determined to keep it there till, alas! his stomach 'revolted,' and the rag was ejected in an access of involuntary sickness.

'And what have you to say about getting into the hollow tree?' asked Sir Henry, keeping his countenance with difficulty.

'But, monsieur, the explanation is easy; oh, most easy! It was thus: I stood there by the kraal wall, and the little grey monsieur hit me in the stomach so that my rifle exploded, and the battle began. I watched whilst recovering myself from monsieur's cruel blow; then, messieurs, I felt the heroic blood of my grandfather boil up in my veins. The sight made me mad. I ground my teeth! Fire flashed from my eyes! I shouted "En avant!" and longed to slay. Before my eyes there rose a vision of my heroic grandfather! In short, I was mad! I was a warrior indeed! But then in my heart I heard a small voice: "Alphonse," said the voice, "restrain thyself, Alphonse! Give not way to this evil passion! These men, though black, are brothers! And thou wouldst slay them? Cruel Alphonse!" The voice was right. I knew it; I was about to perpetrate the most horrible cruelties: to wound! to massacre! to tear limb from limb! And how restrain myself? I looked round; I saw the tree, I perceived the hole. "Entomb thyself," said the voice, "and hold on tight! Thou wilt thus overcome temptation by main force!" It was bitter, just when the blood of my heroic grandfather boiled most fiercely; but I obeyed! I dragged my unwilling feet along; I entombed myself! Through the hole I watched the battle! I shouted curses and defiance on the foe! I noted them fall with satisfaction! Why not? I had not robbed them of their lives. Their gore was not upon my head. The blood of my heroic——'

'Oh, get along with you, you little cur!' broke out Sir Henry, with a shout of laughter, and giving Alphonse a good kick which sent him flying off with a rueful face.

In the evening I had an interview with Mr. Mackenzie, who was suffering a good deal from his wounds, which Good, who was a skilful though unqualified doctor, was treating him for. He told me that this occurrence had taught him a lesson, and that, if he recovered safely, he meant to hand over the Mission to a younger man, who was already on his road to join him in his work, and return to England.

'You see, Quatermain,' he said, 'I made up my mind to this, this very morning, when we were creeping down upon those benighted savages. If we live through this and rescue

Flossie alive,' I said to myself, 'I will go home to England; I have had enough of savages. Well, I did not think that we should live through it at the time; but thanks be to God and you four, we have lived through it, and I mean to stick to my resolution, lest a worse thing befall us. Another such time would kill my poor wife. And besides, Quatermain, between you and me, I am well off; it is thirty thousand pounds I am worth to-day, and every farthing of it made by honest trade and savings in the bank at Zanzibar, for living here costs me next to nothing. So though it will be hard to leave this place, which I have made to blossom like a rose in the wilderness, and harder still to leave the people I have taught, I shall go.'

'I congratulate you on your decision,' answered I, 'for two reasons. The first is, that you owe a duty to your wife and daughter, and more especially to the latter, who should receive some education and mix with girls of her own race, otherwise she will grow up wild, shunning her kind. The other is, that as sure as I am standing here, sooner or later the Masai will try to avenge the slaughter inflicted on them to-day. Two or three men are sure to have escaped in the confusion who will carry the story back to their people, and the result will be that a great expedition will one day be sent against you. It might be delayed for a year, but sooner or later it will come. Therefore, if only for that reason, I should go. When once they have learnt that you are no longer here they may perhaps leave the place alone.'[1]

'You are quite right,' answered the clergyman. 'I will turn my back upon this place in a month. But it will be a wrench, it will be a wrench.'

CHAPTER IX.

INTO THE UNKNOWN.

A WEEK had passed, and we all sat at supper one night in the Mission dining-room, feeling very much depressed in spirits, for the reason that we were going to say good-bye to our kind friends, the Mackenzies, and proceed upon our way at dawn on the

[1] By a sad coincidence, since the above was written by Mr. Quatermain, the Masai have, in April, 1886, massacred a missionary and his wife—Mr. and Mrs. Houghton—on this very Tana River.—EDITOR.

morrow. Nothing more had been seen or heard of the Masai, and save for a spear or two which had been overlooked and was rusting in the grass, and a few empty cartridges where we had stood outside the wall, it would have been difficult to tell that the old cattle kraal at the foot of the slope had been the scene of so desperate a struggle. Mackenzie was, thanks chiefly to his being so temperate a man, rapidly recovering from his wound, and could get about on a pair of crutches; and as for the other wounded men, one had died of gangrene, and the rest were in a fair way to recovery. Mr. Mackenzie's caravan of men had also returned from the coast, so that the station was now amply garrisoned.

Under these circumstances we concluded, warm and pressing as were the invitations for us to stay, that it was time to move on, first to Mount Kenia, and thence into the unknown in search of the mysterious white race which we had set our hearts on discovering. This time we were going to progress by means of the humble but useful donkey, of which we had collected no less than a dozen, to carry our goods and chattels, and, if necessary, ourselves. We had now but two Wakwafis left for servants, and found it quite impossible to get other natives to venture with us into the unknown parts we proposed to explore—and small blame to them. After all, as Mr. Mackenzie said, it was odd that three men, each of whom possessed many of those things that are supposed to make life worth living—health, sufficient means, and position, &c.—should of their own pleasure start out upon a wild-goose chase, from which the chances were they never would return. But then that is what Englishmen are, adventurers to the backbone; and all our magnificent muster-roll of colonies, each of which will in time become a great nation, testify to the extraordinary value of the spirit of adventure which at first sight looks like a mild form of lunacy. 'Adventurer'—he who goes out to meet whatever may come. Well, that is what we all do in the world one way or another, and, speaking for myself, I am proud of the title, because it implies a brave heart and a trust in Providence. Besides, when many and many a noted Crœsus, at whose feet the people worship, and many and many a time-serving and word-coining politician are forgotten, the names of those grand-hearted old adventurers who have made England what she is, will be remembered and taught with love and pride to little children whose spirits yet slumber in the womb of unshaped centuries. Not that we three can expect to be numbered with

such as these, yet have we done something—enough, perhaps, to throw a garment over the nakedness of our folly.

That evening, whilst we were sitting on the verandah, smoking a pipe before turning in, who should come up to us but Alphonse, and, with a magnificent bow, announce his wish for an interview. Being requested to fire away, he explained at some length that he was anxious to attach himself to our party—a statement that astonished me not a little, knowing what a coward the little man was. The reason, however, soon appeared. Mr. Mackenzie was going down to the coast, and thence on to England. Now, if he went down country, Alphonse was persuaded that he would be seized, extradited, sent to France, and guillotined. This was the idea that haunted him, as King Charles's head haunted Mr. Dick, and he brooded over it till his imagination exaggerated the danger ten times. As a matter of fact, the probability is that his offence against the laws of his country had long ago been forgotten, and that he would have been allowed to pass unmolested anywhere except in France; but he could not be got to see this. Constitutional coward as the little man is, he infinitely preferred to face the certain hardships and great risks and dangers of such an expedition as ours, than to expose himself, notwithstanding his intense longing for his native land, to the possible scrutiny of a police officer—which is after all only another exemplification of the truth that, to the majority of men, a far-off foreseen danger, however shadowy, is much more terrible than the most serious present emergency. After listening to what he had to say, we consulted among ourselves, and finally agreed, with Mr. Mackenzie's knowledge and consent, to accept his offer. To begin with, we were very short-handed, and Alphonse was a quick, active fellow, who could turn his hand to anything, and cook—ah, he *could* cook! I believe that he would have made a palatable dish of those gaiters of his heroic grandfather which he was so fond of talking about. Then he was a good-tempered little man, and merry as a monkey, whilst his pompous, vainglorious talk was a source of infinite amusement to us; and what is more, he never bore malice. Of course, his being so pronounced a coward was a great drawback to him, but now that we knew his weakness we could more or less guard against it. So, after warning him of the undoubted risks he was exposing himself to, we told him that we would accept his offer on condition that he would promise implicit obedience to our orders. We also promised to give him wages at the rate of ten pounds a month should he ever return to a civilised

country to receive them. To all of this he agreed with alacrity, and retired to write a letter to his Annette, which Mr. Mackenzie promised to post when he got down country. He read it to us afterwards, Sir Henry translating, and a wonderful composition it was. I am sure the depth of his devotion and the narration of his sufferings in a barbarous country, 'far, far from thee, Annette, for whose adored sake I endure such sorrow,' ought to have touched up the feelings of the stoniest-hearted chambermaid.

Well, the morrow came, and by seven o'clock the donkeys were all loaded, and the time of parting was at hand. It was a melancholy business, especially saying good-bye to dear little Flossie. She and I were great friends, and often used to have talks together—but her nerves had never got over the shock of that awful night when she lay in the power of those bloodthirsty Masai. 'Oh, Mr. Quatermain,' she cried, throwing her arms round my neck and bursting into tears, 'I can't bear to say good-bye to you. I wonder when we shall meet again?'

'I don't know, my dear little girl,' I said. 'I am at one end of life and you are at the other. I have but a short time before me at best, and most things lie in the past, but I hope that for you there are many long and happy years, and everything lies in the future. By-and-by you will grow into a beautiful woman, Flossie, and all this wild life will be like a far-off dream to you; but I hope, even if we never do meet again, that you will think of your old friend and remember what I say to you now. Always try to be good, my dear, and to do what is right, rather than what happens to be pleasant, for in the end, whatever sneering people may say, what is good and what is happy are the same. Be unselfish, and whenever you can, give a helping hand to others—for the world is full of suffering, my dear, and to alleviate it is the noblest end that we can set before us. If you do that you will become a sweet and God-fearing woman, and make many people's lives a little brighter, and then you will not have lived, as so many of your sex do, in vain. And now I have given you a lot of old-fashioned advice, and so I am going to give you something to sweeten it with. You see this little piece of paper. It is what is called a cheque. When we are gone give it to your father with this note—not before, mind. You will marry one day, my dear little Flossie, and it is to buy you a wedding present which you are to wear, and your daughter after you, if you have one, in remembrance of Hunter Quatermain.'

Poor little Flossie cried very much, and gave me a lock of her

bright hair in return, which I still have. The cheque I gave her was for a thousand pounds (which being now well off, and having no calls upon me except those of charity, I could well afford), and in the note I directed her father to invest it for her in Government security, and when she married or came of age to buy her the best diamond necklace he could get for the money and accumulated interest. I chose diamonds because I think that now that King Solomon's Mines are lost to the world, their price will never be much lower than it is at present, so that if in after-life she should ever be in pecuniary difficulties, she will be able to turn them into money.

Well, at last we got off, after much hand-shaking, hat-waving, and also farewell saluting from the natives, Alphonse weeping copiously (for he has a warm heart) at parting with his master and mistress; and I was not sorry for it at all, for I hate those good-byes. Perhaps the most affecting thing of all was to witness Umslopogaas's distress at parting with Flossie, for whom the grim old warrior had conceived a strong affection. He used to say that she was as sweet to see as the only star on a dark night, and was never tired of loudly congratulating himself on having killed the Lygonani who had threatened to murder her. And that was the last we saw of the pleasant Mission-house—a true oasis in the desert—and of European civilisation. But I often think of the Mackenzies, and wonder how they got down country, and if they are now safe and well in England, and will ever see these words. Dear little Flossie! I wonder how she fares there where there are no black folk to do her imperious bidding, and no sky-piercing snow-clad Kenia for her to look at when she gets up in the morning. And so good-bye to Flossie.

After leaving the mission house we made our way, comparatively unmolested, past the base of Mount Kenia, which the Masai call 'Donyo Egere,' or the 'speckled mountain,' on account of the black patches of rock that appear upon its mighty spire, where the sides are too precipitous to allow of the snow lying on them; then on past the lonely lake Baringo, where one of our two remaining Askari, having unfortunately trodden upon a puff-adder, died of snake-bite, in spite of all our efforts to save him. Thence we proceeded a distance of about a hundred and fifty miles to another magnificent snow-clad mountain called Lekakisera, which has never, to the best of my belief, been visited before by a European, but which I cannot now stop to describe. There we rested a fortnight, and then started out into the track—

less and uninhabited forest of a vast district called Elgumi. In this forest alone there are more elephants than I ever met with or heard of before. The mighty mammals literally swarm there entirely unmolested by man, and only kept down by the natural law that prevents any animals increasing beyond the capacity of the country they inhabit to support them. Needless to say, however, we did not shoot many of them, first because we could not afford to waste ammunition, of which our stock was getting perilously low, a donkey loaded with it having been swept away in fording a flooded river; and secondly, because we could not carry away the ivory, and did not wish to kill for the mere sake of slaughter. So we let the great brutes be, only shooting one or two in self-protection. In this district the elephants, being unacquainted with the hunter and his tender mercies, would allow one to walk up to within twenty yards of them in the open, while they stood, with their great ears cocked for all the world like puzzled and gigantic puppy-dogs, and stared at that new and extraordinary phenomenon—man. Occasionally, when the inspection did not prove satisfactory, the staring ended in a trumpet and a charge, but this did not often happen. When it did we had to use our rifles. Nor were elephants the only wild beasts in the great Elgumi forest. All sorts of large game abounded, including lions—confound them! I have always hated the sight of a lion since one bit my leg and lamed me for life. As a consequence, another thing that abounded was the dreaded tsetse fly, whose bite is death to domestic animals. Donkeys have, together with men, hitherto been supposed to enjoy a peculiar immunity from its attacks; but all I have to say, whether it was on account of their poor condition, or because the tsetse in those parts is more poisonous than usual, I do not know, but ours succumbed to its onslaught. Fortunately, however, that was not till two months or so after the bites had been inflicted, when suddenly, after a two days' cold rain, they all died, and on removing the skins of several of them, I found the long yellow streaks upon the flesh, which are characteristic of death from bites from the tsetse, marking the spot where the insect had inserted his proboscis. On emerging from the great Elgumi forest we, still steering northwards, in accordance with the information Mr. Mackenzie had collected from the unfortunate wanderer who reached him only to die so tragically, struck the base in due course of the large lake, called Laga by the natives, which is about fifty miles long by twenty broad, and of which, it may be remembered, he made mention. Thence we

pushed on nearly a month's journey over great rolling uplands, something like those in the Transvaal, but diversified by patches of bush country.

All this time we were continually ascending at the rate of about one hundred feet every ten miles. Indeed the country was on a slope which appeared to terminate at a mass of snow-tipped mountains, for which we were steering, and where we learnt the second lake of which the wanderer had spoken as the lake without a bottom was situated. At length we arrived there, and ascertaining that there *was* a large lake on the top of the mountains, ascended three thousand feet more till we came to a precipitous cliff or edge, to find a great sheet of water some twenty miles square lying fifteen hundred feet below us, and evidently occupying an extinct volcanic crater or craters of vast extent. Perceiving villages on the border of this lake, we descended with great difficulty through forests of pine-trees, which now clothed the precipitous sides of the crater, and were well received by the people, a simple, unwarlike folk, who had never seen or even heard of a white man before, and treated us with great reverence and kindness, supplying us with as much food and milk as we could eat and drink. This wonderful and beautiful lake lay, according to our aneroid, at a height of no less than 11,450 feet above sea-level, and its climate was quite cold, and not at all unlike that of England. Indeed, for the first three days of our stay there we saw little or nothing of the scenery on account of an unmistakable Scotch mist which prevailed. It was this rain that set the tsetse poison working in our remaining donkeys, so that they all died.

This disaster left us in a very awkward position, as we had now no means of transport whatever, though on the other hand we had not much to carry. Ammunition, too, was very short, amounting to but one hundred and fifty rounds of rifle cartridges and some fifty shot-gun cartridges. How to get on we did not know; indeed it seemed to us that we had about reached the end of our tether. Even if we had been inclined to abandon the object of our search, which, shadow as it was, was by no means the case, it was ridiculous to think of forcing our way back some seven hundred miles to the coast in our present plight; so we came to the conclusion that the only thing to be done was to stop where we were—the natives being so well disposed and food plentiful—for the present, and abide events, and try to collect information as to the countries beyond.

Accordingly having purchased a capital log canoe, large enough

to hold us all and our baggage, from the headman of the village we were staying in, presenting him with three empty cold-drawn brass cartridges by way of payment, with which he was perfectly delighted, we set out to make a tour of the lake in order to find the most favourable place to make a camp. As we did not know if we should return to this village, we put all our gear into the canoe, and also a quarter of cooked water-buck, which when young is delicious eating, and off we set, natives having already gone before us in light canoes to warn the inhabitants of the other villages of our approach.

As we were paddling leisurely along Good remarked upon the extraordinary deep blue colour of the water, and said that he understood from the natives, who were great fishermen—fish, indeed, being their principal food—that the lake was supposed to be wonderfully deep, and to have a hole at the bottom through which the water escaped and put out some great fire that was raging below.

I pointed out to him that what he had heard was probably a legend arising from a tradition among the people which dated back to the time when one of the extinct parasitic volcanic cones was in activity. We saw several round the borders of the lake which had no doubt been working at a period long subsequent to the volcanic death of the central crater which now formed the bed of the lake itself. When it became finally extinct the people would imagine that the water from the lake had run down and put out the big fire below, more especially as, though it was constantly fed by streams running from the snow-tipped peaks about, there was no visible exit to it.

The farther shore of the lake we found, on approaching it, to consist of a vast perpendicular wall of rock, which held the water without any intermediate sloping bank, as elsewhere. Accordingly we paddled parallel with this precipice, at a distance of about a hundred paces from it, shaping our course for the end of the lake, where we knew that there was a large village.

As we went we began to pass a considerable accumulation of floating rushes, weed, boughs of trees, and other rubbish, brought, Good supposed, to this spot by some current, which he was much puzzled to account for. Whilst we were speculating about this, Sir Henry pointed out a flock of large white swans, which were feeding on the drift some little way ahead of us. Now I had already noticed swans flying about this lake, and, having never come across them before in Africa, was exceedingly anxious to

obtain a specimen. I had questioned the natives about them, and learnt that they came from over the mountain, always arriving at certain periods of the year in the early morning, when it was very easy to catch them, on account of their exhausted condition. I also asked them what country they came from, when they shrugged their shoulders, and said that on the top of the great black precipice was stony inhospitable land, and beyond that were mountains with snow, and full of wild beasts, where no people lived, and beyond the mountains were hundreds of miles of dense thorn forest, so thick that even the elephants could not get through it, much less men. Next I asked them if they had ever heard of white people like ourselves living on the further side of the mountains and the thorn forest, whereat they laughed; but afterwards a very old woman came and told me that when she was a little girl her grandfather had told her that in his youth *his* grandfather had crossed the desert and the mountains, and pierced the thorn forest, and seen a white people who lived in stone kraals beyond. Of course, as this took the tale back some two hundred and fifty years, the information was very indefinite; but still there it was again, and on thinking it over I grew firmly convinced that there was some truth in all these rumours, and equally firmly determined to solve the mystery. Little did I guess in what an almost miraculous way my desire was to be gratified.

Well, we set to work to stalk the swans, which kept drawing, as they fed, nearer and nearer to the precipice, and at last we pushed the canoe under shelter of a patch of drift within forty yards of them. Sir Henry had the shot-gun, loaded with No. 1, and, waiting for a chance, got two in a line, and, firing at their necks, killed them both. Up rose the rest, thirty or more of them, with a mighty splashing; and, as they did so, he gave them the other barrel. Down came one fellow with a broken wing, and I saw the leg of another drop and a few feathers start out of his back; but he went on quite strong. Up went the swans, circling ever higher till at last they were mere specks level with the top of the frowning precipice, when I saw them form into a triangle and head off for the unknown north-east. Meanwhile we had picked up our two dead ones, and beautiful birds they were, weighing not less than about thirty pounds each, and were chasing the winged one, which had scrambled over a mass of driftweed into a pool of clear water beyond. Finding a difficulty in forcing the canoe through the rubbish, I told our only remaining

Wakwafi servant, whom I knew to be an excellent swimmer, to jump over, dive under the drift, and catch him, knowing that as there were no crocodiles in this lake he could come to no harm. Entering into the fun of the thing, the man did so, and soon was dodging about after the winged swan in fine style, getting gradually nearer to the rock wall, against which the water washed as he did so.

Suddenly he gave up swimming after the swan, and began to cry out that he was being carried away; and, indeed, we saw that, though he was swimming with all his strength towards us, he was being drawn slowly towards the precipice. With a few desperate strokes of our paddles we pushed the canoe through the crust of drift and rowed towards the man as hard as we could, but, fast as we went, he was drawn faster towards the rock. Suddenly I saw that before us, just rising eighteen inches or so above the surface of the lake, was what looked like the top of the arch of a submerged cave or railway tunnel. Evidently, from the watermark on the rock several feet above it, it was generally entirely submerged; but there had been a dry season, and the cold had prevented the snow from melting as freely as usual; so the lake was low and the arch showed. Towards this arch our poor servant was being sucked with frightful rapidity. He was not more than twenty paces from it, and we were about thirty when I saw it, and with little help from us the canoe flew along after him. He struggled bravely, and I thought that we should have saved him, when suddenly I perceived an expression of despair come upon his face, and there before our eyes he was sucked down into the cruel swirling blue depths, and vanished. At the same moment I felt our canoe seized as with a mighty hand, and propelled with resistless force towards the rock.

We realised our danger now and rowed, or rather paddled, furiously in our attempt to get out of the vortex. In vain; in another second we were flying straight for the arch like an arrow, and I thought that we were lost. Luckily I retained sufficient presence of mind to shout out, instantly setting the example by throwing myself into the bottom of the canoe, 'Down on your faces—down!' and the others had the sense to take the hint. In another instant there was a grinding noise, and the boat was pushed down till the water began to trickle over the sides, and I thought that we were gone. But no, suddenly the grinding ceased, and we could again feel the canoe flying along. I turned my head a little—I dared not lift it—and looked up. By the

feeble light that yet reached the canoe, I could make out that a dense arch of rock hung just over our heads, and that was all. In another minute I could not even make out as much as that, for the faint light had merged into shadow, and the shadows had been swallowed up in darkness, utter and complete.

For an hour or so we lay there, not daring to lift our heads for fear lest the brains should be dashed out of them, and scarcely able to speak even, on account of the noise of the rushing water which drowned our voices. Not, indeed, that we had much inclination to speak, seeing that we were overwhelmed by the awfulness of our position and the imminent fear of instant death, either by being dashed against the sides of the cavern, or on a rock, or being sucked down in the raging waters, or perhaps asphyxiated by want of air. All of these and many other modes of death presented themselves to my imagination as I lay at the bottom of the canoe, listening to the swirl of the hurrying waters which ran whither we knew not. One only other sound could I hear, and that was Alphonse's intermittent howl of terror coming from the centre of the canoe, and even that seemed faint and unreal. Indeed, the whole thing overpowered my brain, and I began to believe that I was the victim of some ghastly spirit-shaking nightmare.

(*To be continued.*)

Mr. and Mrs. Kendal.

THE national genius of Scotland is not histrionic. Philosophers, poets and painters, soldiers and sailors, lawyers, doctors, and statesmen not a few, have come from beyond the Tweed; but on the list of great actors Scotland is meagrely represented. This fact is easily explained by reflections vastly agreeable to our national pride—I speak as a Scotchman—but it indicates nevertheless a certain limitation in the national character. Carlyle's aversion from lecturing as a mixture of 'prophecy and playactorism' sprang from an inherited and ingrained prejudice which has begotten a certain bodily and mental rigidity utterly incompatible with mimetic expression. I don't think we are so poor in national virtues that we need claim this as one. What we are poor in is histrionic genius, and I therefore hold it a sacred duty to assert a claim which goes no small way to remove this reproach. Mrs. Kendal is at least half a Scotchwoman—of that there can be no doubt. Her father was as Scotch as Scott himself; and I am not sure that there was not a Scottish strain in her mother's ancestry. Waiving the latter point, however, and admitting that she had the misfortune to be born south of the Border, we may at least say that she is as much a Scotchwoman as Mr. Gladstone is a Scotchman; and we all know that the ex-Premier claims for himself that proudest of titles.

Mr. William Robertson, the father of the lady now known as Mrs. Kendal, was a popular provincial actor and manager, who occasionally, as we shall see, extended his operations to London. He was famous on the Lincolnshire circuit for his performance of country boys and other character-parts of that description. In 1828, or thereabouts, he married an actress named Miss Margherita Elisabetta Marienus, of whom, under her maiden name, I can only find it recorded that she once played Katherine to the Petruchio of the ill-fated E. W. Elton at a little theatre in Berwick Street, Soho. As Mrs. Robertson she became a popular

provincial actress; and in those days to be a provincial actress was necessarily to be an extremely hard-working woman. Nevertheless, Mrs. Robertson found time to bring into the world no fewer than twelve children. The eldest of these, born in 1829, was Thomas William Robertson, the author of *Caste* and *School*; the youngest, born in Great Grimsby, just twenty years later (March 15, 1849), was christened Margaret Shafto, but was known in her family, and before long to all playgoing Britain, as 'Madge' Robertson. The future Mrs. Kendal was thus, as the Irishman put it, 'cradled in the footlights.' All her family and connections were theatrical. From her father, who during the girlhood of his twelfth child was naturally well on in life, she received traditions of the very palmiest of the palmy days. Miss O'Neill was the idol of his recollections. He regarded her as the greatest actress of his time; but it is not quite certain that he had ever seen Mrs. Siddons. In Macready's Diary we obtain a curious glimpse of Mrs. Kendal's father, in his tribulations as a country manager. On November 29, 1834, Macready visited Louth in Lincolnshire, where he was to 'open' in *Virginius*. 'When ready to go on the stage,' he writes, 'Mr. Robertson appeared with a face full of dismay: he began to apologise, and I guessed the remainder. "Bad house?" "Bad, sir, there's no one!" "What! nobody at all?" "Not a soul, sir, except the Warden's party in the boxes." "What, the devil! not one person in the pit or gallery?" "Oh, yes, there are one or two." "Are there five?" "Oh, yes, five." "Then go on; we have no right to give ourselves airs if the people do not choose to come and see us; go on at once!" Mr. Robertson was astonished at what he thought my philosophy, being accustomed, as he said, to be "blown up" by his *stars* when the houses were bad.'

Little Madge was only four years old when she made her first appearance on the stage. Her father, in partnership with Mr. J. W. Wallack, was managing the Marylebone Theatre, a house which more than once threatened to become a north-western rival to Sadler's Wells in the north-east. One evening *The Stranger* was put in the bills, and the manager's little daughter was dressed in her Sunday frock to run on the stage and soften the heart of Kotzebue's gloomy nobleman. Like many an older *débutante* she was far more concerned about the adornments of her person than about the artistic merits of her performance; and, catching sight of her nurse in the front row of the pit (in those days stalls were unknown, at least in Marylebone), she astonished the actors and

enraptured the audience by calling out, 'Oh, nursey, look at my new shoes!' Mrs. Kendal may thus be said to have begun life characteristically by introducing an irresistible touch of nature among the overstrung and conventional emotions of the quasi-legitimate drama. Of this episode she herself has naturally no recollection; but the playbill of the performance was given to her some years ago by the late Mr. E. F. Edgar, who was at the time a member of the company.

The first performance of *The Stranger*, under the Wallack management, took place on October 25, 1853, which may accordingly be taken as, approximately at least, the date of Mrs. Kendal's first appearance. It is curious to glance at the theatrical announcement of the day, and note what a change has come over the London stage in these three-and-thirty years. Shakespeare was in the bill at five theatres, though the Princess's, which, under Charles Kean, was one of the recognised Shakespearean houses, happened at the moment to be given up to *Sardanapalus* and *The Corsican Brothers*. At the Haymarket, Mr. George Vandenhoff appeared as Hamlet, with Mr. Chippendale as Polonius, Mr. Howe as the Ghost, Mr. W. Farren as Horatio (first time), and Mr. Compton as the Gravedigger. At Sadler's Wells, Mr. Phelps's revival of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was in full swing. At the Surrey, Mr. Creswick appeared that week as Macbeth, and as Prospero in *The Tempest*, with Mr. G. Bennett as Caliban, and Miss Fanny Wallack as Miranda. At the City of London Theatre, Mr. E. L. Davenport and Miss Fanny Vining were appearing in *Hamlet* and *Othello*; and at the Marylebone Theatre itself *The Stranger* was played only two nights in the week, while the remaining four were occupied with *Macbeth*—Mr. J. W. Wallack playing Macbeth; Mr. H. Vandenhoff, Macduff; Mr. Edgar, Banquo; Mr. F. Charles, Malcolm, and Mrs. W. Robertson (Mrs. Kendal's mother), one of the Witches. So much for Shakespeare. At Drury Lane, on the other hand, under Mr. E. T. Smith's management, Mr. G. V. Brooke had just given place to a 'Grand American Equestrian Company.' At the Adelphi, under Benjamin Webster's management, *The Discarded Son* (an early version of the French play now known in England as *The Queen's Shilling*) was being played by Leigh Murray, the Keeleys, Paul Bedford, and Miss Woolgar (Mrs. Alfred Mellon). The Lyceum, under the management of Madame Vestris and Charles Mathews, had not yet opened for the season. Alfred Wigan was managing the Olympic, with Robson Emery, Mrs. Stirling, and Miss Priscilla Horton (Mrs. German

Reed) in his company, *Plot and Passion* being the success of the moment. T. P. Cooke, the original William in *Black-Eyed Susan*, was playing that part, along with Long Tom Coffin in *The Pilot*, and Harry Hallyard in *My Poll and my Partner Joe*, at the Great National Standard Theatre, his engagement being announced as his 'last six nights, prior to retirement from the stage.' There was a glorious equestrian entertainment at Astley's, the Victoria and the Pavilion rejoiced in thrilling melodramas, the Britannia offered a Turkish spectacle, and at the Grecian, under the management of Mr. B. O. Conquest, there was running a 'powerful drama,' named *Woman's Secret, or Richelieu's Wager*, 'adapted and translated by Master George Conquest'—now the celebrated pantomimist. These were the theatrical attractions of the week in which Mrs. Kendal, at half the age of the 'baby,' whose *début* is chronicled in the *Rejected Addresses*, made her first appearance on any stage. It was not till February 26, 1855, that, at the same theatre, she played the Blind Child in *The Seven Poor Travellers*, which is usually stated to have been her first part.

At the age of six she performed at the Bristol Theatre the part of Eva in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and afterwards travelled all round the provinces with her father and mother playing it night after night. Eva was a 'singing part,' and Miss Robertson was at this time destined by her parents for the lyric stage. Fortunately for us (since great actresses are far rarer than good singers) early over-exertion impaired her voice. She can still sing delightfully on occasion, as when, to the horror of Shakespearean purists, she introduced 'When daisies pied and violets blue' into the last act of *As You Like It*; but she early abandoned the idea of seeking her career in opera. Eva it may be mentioned, had to endure a nightly apotheosis, being wafted bodily to the celestial regions by a couple of angels (all three strapped to an iron brace) while Uncle Tom in the foreground slept the sleep of the just.

The Bristol and Bath theatres, which formed under the management of Mr. J. H. Chute the best provincial training-school of the period, were, in these early years, Miss Robertson's headquarters. Here she went through a vast and varied experience—dancing in the ballet, singing in burletta and burlesque (she appeared, for instance, in a minor part in Brough's *Endymion*, in which Miss Kate Terry played Diana and Miss Ellen Terry Cupid), and acting in farce, comedy, melodrama, and tragedy. In *Friends or Foes*, a version by Horace Wigan of Sardou's *Nos Intimes*, she played Marécat's scapegrace son (called Theodore

Yielding in the English play), who makes himself ill with smoking; and Mr. David James (who, by the way, played the seductive young lover, Maurice) relates to this day how he lent her the requisite jacket and trousers. On another occasion, Mr. James Bennett, a diminutive tragedian, came on a starring visit, and Miss Robertson, then barely in her teens, was called upon to play Virginia to his Virginius, as any full-grown actress would have overtopped this dumpy Roman Father. Near the beginning of the fourth act, where Virginia, according to the stage direction, 'shrieks and rushes into her father's arms,' Miss Robertson had been instructed to put all possible vigour into the filial embrace. Carrying out her instructions somewhat too conscientiously, she managed to give Mr. Bennett's wig a jerk, which caused the front hair, fixed in the old-fashioned way upon a wire, to rise straight up from his head, like quills upon the fretful porcupine. The consternation of Virginius, the confusion of the young Virginia, and the delight of the audience may easily be imagined. Fortunately American slang had not yet come into vogue, otherwise some irrepressible gallery-boy would doubtless have seized the opportunity to exasperate the tragedian still further by recommending him to 'keep his hair on!'

I am indebted to my friend Mr. Frederick Wedmore for the following interesting notes as to Miss Madge Robertson's career at the Bristol Theatre. 'It was not,' he writes, 'the new theatre now called the Prince's, which Mr. Phipps built several years afterwards, but the old theatre in King Street, down in the city —a playhouse which Garrick had acted in and praised. . . . When I knew it best, just over twenty years ago, in almost the last days of the old stock company, it was managed by Mr. Chute, a relative of Macready's, whose occasional performances of Falstaff and of Don César de Bazan were a treat, and who got together a company unquestionably the best at that moment out of London. In 1862 Miss Kate Terry—fresh from her triumphs as Cordelia at the Princess's, and as the heroine of *Friends and Foes* at the St. James's during an illness of Miss Herbert's—was of the regular troupe, and played everything from the poetic drama to *The Wreck Ashore*. Leaving it at the end of the year to open with Fechter at the Lyceum, she returned for a month or so in the following autumn, and it was then that I first remember seeing Miss Madge Robertson, who played the waiting gentlewoman in *Much Ado about Nothing* to the Beatrice of Kate and the Hero of Ellen Terry. I am not quite sure whether it was in the

Christmas of that year or in the Christmas of the next, but I think it must have been December, 1863, that Madge Robertson was the Cinderella of the Bristol pantomime. The part was small, subordinated very much to that of the Prince—doubtless Miss Henrietta Hodson, then a most popular young performer of boys' parts at the theatre. I think Madge Robertson played with a good deal of spirit in Dance's little comedy, *A Wonderful Woman*. I know that on the occasion of her first benefit, which was announced by the young girl's father with a very becoming modesty, she played, with the spontaneity, freedom, and vigour which are still so much her charm, the part of Mrs. Ormsby Delmaine in *The Serious Family*. It is not possible that I had any critical discernment at that time, though I was permitted to write theatrical paragraphs for the newspaper editor whose pupil I then was; but perhaps my natural devotion to the theatre sharpened my faculties—at all events, I had not hesitated to be the earliest to declare the high promise of the very young actress who, like myself, was continuing a general education out of working hours. Probably Mrs. Kendal would be the first to allow how much she must have owed to the knowledge of the stage possessed by her father and her mother—her father, as I remember him, not a great, but a judicious actor, stronger in delivery and in bearing than in "characterisation"; her mother, a very able "first old woman," who could play a classical part with dignity, and yet appreciated the humour of the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, and was quite excellent as the fussy Mrs. Willoughby in *The Ticket-of-Leave Man*. Yet even then an increasing number of us were able to see in Madge Robertson much more than the result of a father and mother's long experience and continued care.'

Miss Robertson was thus already an experienced actress when, at the age of sixteen, she made her first appearance in London. Mr. Walter Montgomery, who had taken the Haymarket Theatre for an autumn season, opened his campaign on July 29, 1865, with *Hamlet*, he himself playing the Prince, Mr. James Fernandez Laertes, Mr. Montague Osric, Mr. H. Marston the Ghost, Miss Atkinson the Queen, and Miss Robertson Ophelia. She at once made a favourable impression; but, supporting a second-rate actor in an off-season, she could scarcely hope to take the town by storm. According to Mr. Edmund Yates, Walter Montgomery's Hamlet was 'virulent but vulgar, energetic but decidedly provincial,' and altogether the new actress's surroundings were not such as to force her upon public attention. Her

performance of Ophelia was several times repeated, and a week or two later Miss Robertson played Blanche to the King John of Mr. Montgomery, the Faulconbridge of Mr. Fernandez, and the Constance of Miss Atkinson. On August 21, Ira Aldridge, the 'African Roscius,' appeared as Othello, on which occasion Miss Robertson played Desdemona, Mr. Montgomery Iago, Mr. Fernandez Cassio, and the Hon. Lewis Wingfield Roderigo. It is worth noting, too, that 'for one night only' the future Mrs. Kendal appeared in burlesque on the London stage, having consented to supply the place of Miss Ellen Howard, absent through illness, in the part of Cupid in Mr. Burnand's *Ixion, or the Man at the Wheel.* It was in this burlesque that Miss Ada Cavendish appeared as Venus, while the Hon. Lewis Wingfield, according to Professor Morley, 'dressed his thin figure in petticoats and spoke falsetto as Minerva.'

The Haymarket season over, Miss Robertson went to Nottingham, where, on September 25, she spoke the prologue which inaugurated Mr. Walter Montgomery's management of the Theatre Royal. At Nottingham she remained until December, and then passed on to Hull, where a new Theatre Royal, built by a syndicate of local subscribers, had been placed under the management of William Brough, the well-known burlesque writer. In the opening performance (Boxing Night, 1865) she played Anne Carew, the heroine of Tom Taylor's comedy *A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing*; and she remained the 'leading lady' of Mr. Brough's company for nearly a year, taking her farewell benefit on November 30, 1866.

All this time she had the advantage of her parents' instruction and support, her mother, indeed, being a member of the company. In the spring of 1866 it happened that Mr. Phelps came to Hull on a three-nights' starring engagement. On Thursday he played Sir Pertinax MacSycophant, on Friday Richelieu—Miss Robertson being the Julie—and on Saturday he was announced for Macbeth. Saturday morning came, and the tragedian appeared at rehearsal. 'Who plays Lady Macbeth?' he asked. 'I do,' said Mrs. Robertson, who, it should be said, was an intimate friend of the sturdy Samuel. 'You, my dear!' he replied, using the accepted form of address at rehearsal, 'No, no—you're too old!' Mrs. Robertson, who was, in fact, about his own age, laughingly assured him that she was the only Lady Macbeth available; but he insisted that the Lady must be decidedly younger than the Thane, and sent for Mr. Brough, who

promptly appeared on the scene. 'Well, Mr. Phelps,' said the manager, on being appealed to, 'if you won't have Mrs. Robertson, the only alternative is Miss Robertson!—what do you say to her?' The suggestion that she should, at a few hours' notice, play such a part as Lady Macbeth, and that to an actor so famous, and, in her youthful eyes, so stern and terrible, as Mr. Phelps, sent Miss Madge's heart into the heels of her boots. But Phelps, having once committed himself, was not the man to draw back, and the young actress, not yet quite seventeen, found greatness thrust upon her in a way she little anticipated, and as little enjoyed. She knew the lines of the part—in those days an ambitious young actress studied many a character for the study's sake—and hurriedly rehearsed it under her mother's guidance. The dresses which Mrs. Robertson was to have worn were the only ones available, and as the proportions of the mother's figure were not precisely those of the daughter, this circumstance did not tend to place the young tragedienne more at her ease. The evening came, the theatre was crammed with the Saturday-night audience of a north-country seaport, and the curtain rose upon the tragedy. We may well imagine that the feelings of the young girl, as she stood at the wing, letter in hand, ready to make her first entrance, were none of the most enviable; but she heard her father's voice encouraging her,[1] she screwed her courage to the sticking-place, and dashed at her task. To say that she rivalled Mrs. Siddons in the part would probably be an exaggeration; but she was already popular with the audience, and as nothing pleases Yorkshiremen so much as pluck, they gave her every encouragement. At the end of the first act there was a loud 'call,' to which Mr. Phelps responded alone. Theatrical etiquette justified him in doing so; but the audience cared nothing for etiquette, and, fancying that he intended a slight to their young favourite, they hissed him loudly. Nor were they easily appeased. Throughout the evening there were frequent hostile demonstrations, and at the end of the performance a deputation from the gallery met the actress's father at the stage door, with the offer —'Just you say t' word, Mr. Robertson, an' we'll dook un in 't Hoomber!' Mr. Robertson assured them that the whole affair was a misunderstanding, but it was with some difficulty that Mr. Phelps managed to reach his carriage in safety. He never

[1] 'My father,' says Mrs. Kendal, 'would often stand at the wing and whisper to me as I was going on, "Let nobody else be seen!"'—a very excusable exaggeration on the part of a father inciting his daughter and pupil to do her best.

again, I believe, appeared in Hull; but he bore no malice against the innocent cause of his discomfiture. On the contrary, he soon afterwards honoured Miss Robertson with a special invitation to play Lady Teazle to his Sir Peter at the Standard Theatre, and both Mr. and Mrs. Kendal have now the warmest recollection of his kindness of heart and helpfulness to young and struggling talent.

On the Monday after this eventful Saturday Miss Madge Robertson appeared as Papillonetta, with a pair of butterfly wings, in William Brough's burlesque of that name. The actress who could thus pass at one bound from the tigress to the butterfly was at least not lacking in versatility.

In the early part of 1867 Miss Robertson starred at Liverpool, where Mr. H. J. Byron was then managing the Theatre Royal, and at Nottingham, her repertory consisting of Pauline, Juliet, Lady Teazle, Mrs. Haller, Peg Woffington, &c. On Easter Monday, April 22, she appeared at Drury Lane as Edith Fairlam, in Andrew Halliday's comedy drama, *The Great City*, which ran for more than a hundred nights. A hansom cab, with horse and driver complete, was brought on the stage in this play, and was considered a startling innovation in the direction of 'realism.' The days of 'realistic' troopships, and zerebas, and horse-races were not yet. In the following autumn (October 28) Miss Robertson joined the regular Haymarket Company under Buckstone's management. During the winter and spring of 1867–68 she appeared with Sothern in his small but famous repertory, to which was added Dr. Westland Marston's adaptation of *Le Roman d'un Jeune Homme Pauvre* (*A Hero of Romance*), Sothern playing Victor de Tourville and Miss Robertson Blanche Dumont. Twelve years later Mr. Coghlan treated the same theme in his comedy called *Good Fortune*, produced by Mr. and Mrs. Kendal at the St. James's in 1880. For Buckstone's benefit, on July 16, 1868, Miss Robertson played Hypolita in Colley Cibber's *She Wou'd and She Wou'd Not*, her future husband, Mr. W. H. Kendal, playing Don Octavio, and Buckstone himself Trappanti. That autumn she went on tour with the Haymarket company, playing Lady Teazle, Lydia Languish, Lady Gay Spanker, Hypolita, and other parts. In a month or two, however, she left the company to return for a short time to her old admirers in Hull, where she appeared, on October 28, in *Passion Flowers*, an adaptation of De Musset's *On ne Badine pas avec l'Amour*, made specially for her by her brother, T. W. Robertson. Meanwhile

she had been engaged by Mr. John Hollingshead to occupy a leading position in the company with which he was about to open the new Gaiety Theatre, not as yet prescient of its high destiny as the fane wherein for so many years the sacred lamp of burlesque was to be tended with such reverent rites. The opening piece (December 21, 1868) was *On the Cards*, an adaptation by Mr. Alfred Thompson of *L'Escamoteur* by MM. D'Ennery and Brésil. In this Miss Robertson appeared along with Mr. Alfred Wigan. On March 28, 1869, T. W. Robertson's comedy of *Dreams* replaced *On the Cards*, the author's sister playing Lady Clara Vere de Vere. Two months later she rejoined the Haymarket company, then playing at the Standard Theatre before starting on its provincial tour. Here she appeared as Miss Hardcastle, and in the course of the subsequent tour added Rosalind and Viola to her repertory. Her connection with the Haymarket company now lasted uninterruptedly for five years and a half—years which established her fame, while they matured and perfected her art.

It was towards the end of this provincial tour (August 7, 1869) that at St. Saviour's Church, Manchester, Miss Madge Robertson became Mrs. W. H. Kendal.

Mr. William Hunter Grimston was born in London on December 16, 1843. His family was not theatrical, and, as a boy, he showed no particular predisposition towards the theatre, or at least was in no sense stage-struck. On the contrary, his friends intended him for the medical profession, while he himself designed (punning apart) to make his way in the world by his pencil; and it was the merest accident that shaped his ends regardless of this rough-hewing. When a lad of eighteen, in the spring of 1861, he strolled one evening into the pit of the Royal Soho Theatre, since known as the Royalty, in Dean Street, Soho. It was then under the management of Mr. Mowbray, whose burlesque of *Billy Taylor, or the Gay Young Fellow*, happened to be in the bills. The young draughtsman was always on the look-out for practice, and at once began to make thumb-nail sketches of the characters. A gentleman standing by looked over his shoulder, was interested in his performance, and introduced himself as the manager of the theatre and author of the burlesque. On the strength of his artistic acquirements Mr. Grimston was made free of the theatre both before and behind the curtain, and was soon bitten with the longing to distinguish himself on the boards. At first he went on

merely as a well-dressed young man among the *invités*, the 'Adelphi guests,' in comedy and farce; but before long he was promoted to a speaking part, that of the juvenile lover in *A Wonderful Woman*. As he was now to appear in the bills, it became necessary for him to choose a theatrical name, and he consulted the manager on the point. 'Why, sir,' said Mr. Mowbray, 'I suppose you mean to be a second Kemble one of these days—suppose you call yourself Kendal?' So said, so done; and the likeness between the two names, which must have struck many people as an odd coincidence, thus proves to be no coincidence at all. For nearly a year Mr. Kendal remained at the Soho Theatre, during which time Miss Ellen Terry, Mr. David James, and Mr. Charles Wyndham were also members of the company. In the spring of 1862 he accepted an engagement at the Moor Street Theatre, Birmingham; but, after six or eight weeks, the manager's insolvency brought the season to a close. In the autumn of the same year Mr. Kendal became a member of the stock company at the Theatre Royal, Glasgow, where he served a four years' apprenticeship to his profession, supporting all the chief 'stars' of the period—Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean, Phelps, Miss Helen Faucit, G. V. Brooke, Anderson, Mr. and Mrs. Dion Boucicault, Fechter, Sothern, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Mathews, &c. Fechter was so much pleased with his performance of Laertes, that, some years afterwards, he induced him to leave the Haymarket for a time, in order to play this part at the Lyceum; and being unable to appear one night in the course of his engagement, he suggested that Mr. Kendal should replace him as Hamlet, a proposal which, however, the latter declined. His chief success in original work during his provincial probation was the part of Tom Sutherland, in Dr. Westland Marston's *Favourite of Fortune*, which first saw the footlights in Glasgow during an engagement of Mr. Sothern. Mr. Kendal was led to hope that he would be engaged to play the part on the production of the play in London, but, to his disappointment, Mr. Buckstone himself undertook it, regardless of its being a young light-comedy part. It was thought by some people the most effective part in the piece, which may account both for Mr. Buckstone's desire to play it himself, and for Mr. Sothern's willingness that it should fall into the hands of an actor not naturally suited for it. Mr. Charles Mathews, who took a lively interest in Mr. Kendal's career, was ultimately successful in procuring him a London engagement. In the summer of 1866 he supported Mr. and Mrs. Mathews in a

short starring engagement at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, Liverpool (then under the management of Mr. Alexander Henderson), during which Mr. Mathews paid him the compliment of resigning to him the part of Tom Dexter in *The Overland Route*, and himself playing Buckstone's part of Lovibond. Being under engagement to appear at the Haymarket in the following autumn, Mr. Mathews insisted on bringing with him his young *protégé*, who accordingly appeared on October 31, 1866, as Augustus Mandeville in *A Dangerous Friend*. He soon made himself a permanent place in the Haymarket company, and took undisputed possession of what is technically termed 'the juvenile lead.' In the autumn of 1867 he played Romeo and Orlando to the Juliet and Rosalind of Mrs. Scott-Siddons, and in 1868–69, during a temporary engagement of Miss Bateman, he played Manfred in Mosenthal's *Pietra*, and created the part of Bob Levitt the drunken mechanic in Tom Taylor's *Mary Warner*. It was in the summer of 1869, as we have seen, that Miss Madge Robertson became a permanent member of the Haymarket company, then on tour; and before its return to head-quarters she had changed her name (though not yet in the playbills) for that of Mrs. W. H. Kendal.

On October 25, 1869, Mrs. Kendal 'created' the character of Lilian Vavasour in *New Men and Old Acres*, by Tom Taylor and A. W. Dubourg—her first 'creation' at the Haymarket, and one of her most successful. The history of this play affords a curious instance of the shortsightedness which all managers occasionally exhibit in the selection, or rather in the rejection, of pieces. It had gone the round of nearly every management in London, and had been rejected by Mr. Wigan, Mr. Bancroft, Mr. Toole, and many others. At last it found a resting-place at the Haymarket —that is to say, it was laid on the shelf. At that time Mr. Buckstone was in the habit of frequently requesting Mr. Kendal to read and give an opinion upon plays submitted to him; and in this way the manuscript, after having been pigeon-holed for some time, came into Mr. Kendal's hands. He read the play—it was then called *Love or Money*—and was so struck with it that he at once urged Mr. Buckstone by all means to produce it without delay. 'Ah,' said the manager, 'I suppose there is a very fine part in it for you.' 'No,' he replied, 'there's no part for me in it, for I don't think Brown would suit me.' 'Very well,' replied Buckstone, 'I will have a look at it again.' This second reading produced no effect, and nothing more was said on the subject until the follow-

ing year, when, at the commencement of the usual provincial tour, Mr. Kendal once more reminded Mr. Buckstone of the despised comedy, suggesting that he should try it in the country. At last the manager consented, saying, 'Very well. As you think so highly of it, you can play it for your wife's benefit at Manchester.' At Manchester accordingly it was produced, with convincing success, which was redoubled on its transference to the London boards. A somewhat similar history might be related of Mr. Theyre Smith's brilliant little comedietta, *Uncle's Will*, which was not produced in London until the management had been unwillingly convinced of its merits by its reception in Manchester.

In 1870 commenced that series of fantastic blank-verse comedies which established the reputation of Mr. W. S. Gilbert, and confirmed the popularity of Mr. and Mrs. Kendal. The first in order was *The Palace of Truth*, in which Mrs. Kendal played the Princess Zeolide, and her husband Prince Philamine. In the following year *Pygmalion and Galatea* was even more successful than its predecessor, all London flocking to see Mrs. Kendal as the animated statue and Mr. Kendal as the too-creative sculptor. *The Wicked World*, which Mr. Gilbert himself parodied in *The Happy Land*, proved comparatively unattractive, but the fault lay in the tenuity of the subject, not in Mr. Kendal's Ethais or Mrs. Kendal's Selene. In the following year Mr. Gilbert deserted fairyland for the world of to-day, and produced *Charity*, in which Mr. and Mrs. Kendal played Frederic Smailey and Mrs. Van Brugh. Unfortunately Mr. Gilbert had become so habituated to the conditions of his own peculiar fairyland, that he made his everyday personages talk as though the scene were still the Palace of Truth; and this error, with others less serious, led to the comparative failure of the play. Another noteworthy production of this period was Mr. G. W. Godfrey's *Queen Mab*. Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, indeed, were the means of introducing not only Mr. Godfrey, but Mr. Sydney Grundy, to the London stage.

These were the principal new plays in which Mr. and Mrs. Kendal took part during their Haymarket period, but both in London and on the provincial tours of the company they did much excellent work in the 'legitimate' repertory of the theatre. Traditions of the great days still lingered about the old house, and the company as then constituted was worthy of the great days, in respect, at least, of comic talent. Buckstone, with his chuckle, leer, and hop, was a born low-comedian, a man of genius after his kind, the acknowledged chief of that race of which Mr.

Toole is almost the sole survivor. Compton, with his roll of the eye, his smack of the lips, and his curtsey of the knees, was an incomparable Touchstone, and Crabtree, and Mawworm. Who does not remember his delivery of Mawworm's sermon, a piece of such irresistible drollery that audiences clung to the tradition established at Liverpool, when a happy 'gag' of the elder Mathews enraptured the public, and, in defiance of all dramatic propriety, used to insist on encoring it? As for 'old Chippendale,' with his twinkling eye, short nose, and comically sensitive mouth, there was never, perhaps, a more delicate or more amiable actor on any stage. He seemed born to play Mr. Hardcastle, and Sir Anthony Absolute, and Sir Peter Teazle; or rather Goldsmith and Sheridan seemed to have foreseen him when they created these genial humourists. Not less lovely (if one may use in its uncorrupted sense a word which schoolgirl slang has debased) was his Adam, in *As You Like It*, an ideal embodiment of 'the constant service of the antique world;' and I can see to this day the expression of childlike benevolence and utter guilelessness with which, in the part of Uncle Foozle, he pathetically demanded '*Have* I a deadly aspect?'[1] Henry Howe, again, still happily among us, was as sterling a comedian as ever trod the boards; and the minor members of the company were no less valuable in their way—'little Clark,' for instance, with his peculiar quaintness, and Rogers, a storehouse of memories and traditions, who could go over every detail in the 'business' of Macready's Alfred Evelyn or Mrs. Nisbett's Lady Gay Spanker. Among such comrades as these did Mr. and Mrs. Kendal work earnestly and untiringly, both in London and the provinces. Orlando and Rosalind, Captain Absolute and Lydia Languish, Charles Surface and Lady Teazle, Young Marlow and Miss Hardcastle—these parts and such as these formed a pleasant and beneficial change from the heroes and heroines of Gilbertian and cup-and-saucer comedy. Even parts which would have been declined by actresses less devoted to their art fell to the lot of Mrs. Kendal. She delighted Mr. Buckstone, for example, by assuming the false front of sausage-curls appropriate to Mrs. Dove in *Married Life*, and playing the part (which was, of course, quite outside her stated 'line of business') in such a way as to make a new character of it. In the bright little duologues, which were then in fashion—

[1] Mr. Chippendale, who is almost as old as the century (born 1801), has latterly declined into a state of 'second childishness.' It is pathetic to hear of the fine old actor repeating to himself, as his mind wanders over bygone days, broken phrases from the parts he played so delightfully.

such as Mr. S. Theyre Smith's *Uncle's Will* and *A Little Change* by Mr. Sydney Grundy—Mr. and Mrs. Kendal were very successful. Mr. Kendal, too, won laurels on his own account by several light-comedy performances. Horatio Craven, in *His First Champagne*, was one of these, and another was Jeremy Diddler, in *Raising the Wind*, which he repeated almost a hundred consecutive times.

On leaving the Haymarket Mr. and Mrs. Kendal appeared at the Opera Comique in the early part of 1875, under Mr. Hollingshead's management, playing *The Lady of Lyons*, *As You Like It*, and *She Stoops to Conquer*. Meanwhile Mr. Hare, having seceded from the Prince of Wales's company, was preparing to commence management on his own account at the Court Theatre, and with true managerial instinct determined to make Mr. and Mrs. Kendal the pillars of his house. They appeared on the first night of his management (March 13, 1875) in Mr. Coghlan's *Lady Flora*, a rather unsuccessful production. This was followed by Mr. Hamilton Aïdé's comedy, *A Nine Days' Wonder*, after which came *Broken Hearts*, a fourth and last fairy play from the pen of Mr. W. S. Gilbert. It was successful enough to call forth a parody, *Cracked Heads*; but was too insubstantial to hold its place long on the stage. A very different play followed it, in which both Mr. and Mrs. Kendal found and seized the opportunity for a remarkable and enduringly popular creation. This was Mr. Palgrave Simpson's adaptation of *Les Pattes de Mouche*, the ingenious comedy with which Sardou made his first great success. Colonel Blake, in *A Scrap of Paper* (so the adaptation was called), remains to this day one of the very best of Mr. Kendal's performances, and Mrs. Kendal has done few things more thoroughly delightful than her Susan Hartley.

They now deserted Mr. Hare for a time, to join forces with Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft at the Prince of Wales's. After making a gallant struggle to keep his stage supplied with none but home-made wares, Mr. Bancroft had at last been forced to commission Messrs. Bolton and Savile Rowe (now known as Messrs. Clement Scott and B. C. Stephenson) to make him an adaptation of *Nos Intimes*, which was produced under the title of *Peril*. In this production Mrs. Kendal played Lady Ormond; Mr. Bancroft Sir George Ormond; Mr. Kendal Dr. Thornton; and Mr. Sugden Captain Bradford. The success was great; and while a similar and even more powerful attraction was being

prepared to follow it up, *London Assurance*—revised by the author, and reduced to four acts—was placed in the bills, with Mrs. Kendal as Lady Gay Spanker, Mr. Kendal as Charles Courtly, Mr. Bancroft as Dazzle, and Mrs. Bancroft as Pert. At last, on January 12, 1878, Messrs. Bolton and Savile Rowe's adaptation of Sardou's *Dora*, entitled *Diplomacy*, was produced with signal and memorable success. The cast was perhaps the strongest on record in the annals of the contemporary stage. Mr. and Mrs. Kendal played the hero and heroine (Julian Beauclerc and Dora), Mr. Bancroft played Orloff, Mrs. Bancroft the Countess Gicka, Mr. John Clayton Harry Beauclerc, and Mr. Arthur Cecil Baron Stein. Thus, with the exception of Mr. Hare, all the leading figures of our modern school of comedy appeared on the same stage; and the result was an almost unprecedented success, the crowning glory of the Bancroft management.

Mr. and Mrs. Kendal now rejoined Mr. Hare, appearing at the Court Theatre. After reviving *A Scrap of Paper* and *The Ladies' Battle*, they produced *The Queen's Shilling*, adapted by Mr. G. W. Godfrey from *Le Fils de Famille*, in which again Mr. and Mrs. Kendal found two of their very best parts—Frank Maitland and Kate Greville—while Mr. Hare's Colonel Daunt was also memorably excellent. It was with *The Queen's Shilling* that Messrs. Hare and Kendal, in the following autumn, commenced their managerial partnership at the St. James's Theatre (October 4, 1879).

I need not trace in detail the history of seven eventful seasons of management at the St. James's. Both before and behind the curtain Messrs. Hare and Kendal have pursued the methods inaugurated by Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft at the Prince of Wales's. They have striven after perfection of scenic realism and an even excellence of acting; they have done all in their power to render 'the front of the house' comfortable and attractive to a luxurious generation. Behind the curtain they have remembered that dramatic artists have, or ought to have, the tastes and habits of ladies and gentlemen, and they have attended to the proprieties and comforts of life in a way which managers of the old school would have regarded as extravagant and highly unnecessary. In her famous address before the Social Science Congress at Birmingham, Mrs. Kendal attributed to Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft the much-needed reform of what may be called the domestic arrangements behind the scenes—a reform which has since extended to all theatres of repute. As a matter of curiosity, I may mention

one characteristic detail in the traditional economy—economy in two senses—of old-fashioned theatres. In the gentlemen's dressing-rooms soap and towels were provided by the management, but the ladies of the company were expected to furnish these necessaries for themselves! Mrs. Kendal, I believe, was instrumental in procuring the abolition of this petty abuse; so it cannot be said that she has passed her life without striking a blow in vindication of the Rights of Women.

Though the Hare-Kendal management, like Dogberry, 'hath had losses' now and then, it has on the whole prospered greatly, and has made the St. James's, which had spelt ruin to many former managers, one of the most popular and fashionable of West End houses. It is true that, with two exceptions, the chief successes of the seven years have been of French origin, and this is sometimes made a subject of reproach to Messrs. Hare and Kendal. Perhaps they are not altogether to be acquitted of a certain timidity, but in playing for the vast stakes involved in modern management who would not be timid? Again, a committee of three is naturally more cautious than a single manager, responsible only to himself. In hearing a play read, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal and Mr. Hare generally follow the plan adopted by Macready at the famous reading of Bulwer Lytton's *Richelieu*—no one makes any remarks, but each of the three hearers has a pencil and paper on which to jot down, act by act, his or her impressions and opinions, so that they may, literally, compare notes at the end. This is a severe ordeal to pass, and it is no wonder that though many are called few are chosen. Yet it must not be supposed that the St. James's management is lacking either in enterprise or liberality. One of their first moves was to produce Lord Tennyson's *Falcon*, exquisitely mounted and exquisitely played; and if the ungrateful public failed to reward their skill and care, that was no fault of theirs. Again, they have deserved well of the theatrical state in giving that remarkable writer, Mr. A. W. Pinero, what was practically his first chance, besides affording him many subsequent opportunities. *The Money-spinner* made his talent known to students of the stage, *The Squire* established his reputation with the great public. It was with reference to *The Squire* that a charge of plagiarism was brought against author and managers alike, which, though it no doubt helped to assure the success of the piece, was the cause of much ill-will and annoyance. No one who knows how frequent and strange are coincidences of idea will have any difficulty in

accepting Mr. Pinero's disclaimer of all indebtedness to 'Far from the Madding Crowd.' Only the following year another coincidence occurred under almost precisely similar circumstances, which has unfortunately resulted in depriving us, as yet, of one of Mr. Pinero's works. He had written a play specially for the St. James's; he read it to the management, and it was accepted. The very same evening Mr. Kendal, happening to open his desk, caught sight of a manuscript which had been sent him for perusal some months before. He took it up, looked into it, and was astonished to find it almost identical in idea with the play which Mr. Pinero had read to him only a few hours before. On learning this similarity, Mr. Pinero, rendered sensitive by recent experience, at once withdrew his play, and entered into communication with the author who had anticipated him. At his suggestion each read the other's play and each wrote the other a letter detailing the circumstances, as a safeguard against subsequent misunderstandings. Here, for the present, the matter rests, neither of the plays having yet been produced. When we come to think of it, there are so many searchers after dramatic motives, and so few motives, comparatively speaking, which are capable of successful treatment on the modern stage, that it would be a miracle if two authors should not now and then happen to seize simultaneously upon the same idea.

Mrs. Kendal has sometimes threatened to retire from the stage when she has turned the corner of her fortieth year; but one trusts that when the time arrives she will not have the heart to leave empty a place which, to alter Orlando's words, may never be 'as well supplied.' She is, and will be for years to come, in the maturity of her powers, and absolute idleness can scarcely be an attraction to an artist so devoted to her art. Even if the English public had no claims upon her, she owes the Americans a visit; and it will be strange if, having once seen her, the Americans are content to let that once suffice.

WILLIAM ARCHER.

Sorel.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'CHRISTINA NORTH,' 'A GOLDEN BAR,' &c.

CHAPTER I.

SOREL LEIGH was rich and young and beautiful, and she took frankly as her right the good things which the world had to offer. She was not so foolish as to be proud of a good fortune which she had done nothing to acquire; but it seemed to her that since she had been so favoured, a voluntary act of self-sacrifice would have been little else than ingratitude. She had the self-confidence engendered by her position as an only and motherless girl, which derives an additional stimulus from an instinctive rebellion against the advice of maiden aunts. Her father interfered with her very little; he was engaged at his bank during the day, and he had a good many business anxieties, but he had no anxieties about Sorel. He was glad that she had so many friends. There was always some nominal chaperon to be found, to take her wherever she wished to go; a great many people admired her, but there was safety in numbers. Sometimes he heard a rumour of some special attentions paid to her, and then he would question the girl, only to be reassured by her frank replies. When she was eighteen she had been already 'out' for a year, and she was still fancy-free.

'I like people to admire me,' she would say. 'It is pleasant to be liked; but I should not like it if it became serious. I don't think you need be uneasy, papa; no one has become serious as yet. I think they know that I should not like it.'

But this was an unnatural frame of mind, and it was not likely to last very long.

There was a Mr. Giles Lister, who took pains to be in her society, and who singled her out with an absolute indifference to the strictures of maiden aunts—about whom she began to feel

that she would rather not be questioned. She did not tell herself that she was in love, though he did his best to compel her to acknowledge it. After many and varied experiences, he was agreeably surprised to find that he was capable of falling in love himself; and in this case all the circumstances were in his favour. He felt it to be eminently desirable that he should marry money, and money was here happily allied to youth and beauty, and an innocent capacity for enjoyment which was very contagious. He felt that life would be sensibly brightened if he could pass through it with Sorel Leigh at his side. This conviction was strengthened during a week that they spent together at a country house. Already her blue eyes met his less frankly, already an undefined feeling made her heart beat quicker at his approach; and when at last, upon the impulse of the moment, he spoke, he did not feel any serious doubts as to her answer. He had always been popular with women. He had an easy self-possession which was yet not wanting in deference, and an air of distinction which is a surer passport to favour than positive good looks. He found life so pleasant as to have no occasion for serious preoccupations; and yet he was unlike the others, and when he asked if he might not love her, Sorel did not forbid it. But though ordinarily self-confident enough, she did feel that upon this occasion she could not venture to be altogether independent. She wrote to her father, and said that she must wait for his answer; and the answer came in the shape of a telegraphic summons to return home immediately. Mr. Leigh had had a seizure, and the doctors gave little hope of his recovery.

Sorel had had but little reason to love him, but he was her only near relation, and she clung to him as her sole support. Yet in the days that followed, of absorbing anxiety and unavailing watching, and even through the gloom of death, one memory had still power to quicken the pulses of her life. She still felt Giles Lister's eyes upon her as they parted, and heard his whispered farewell. When she sat orphaned and desolate in the great London house, she yet felt that so long as he lived she would not be altogether alone in the world.

He had written her one short note: she received it on the day of her father's death; but after that he gave no further sign. When they told her that she was not only orphaned, but destitute, she felt strange and forlorn rather than grieved; it did not occur to her to connect this fact with Mr. Giles Lister's disappearance. But the days passed and he never came. It was the failure of his

speculations which had occasioned or hastened old Mr. Leigh's death, and Lister knew it; and he found it expedient to go abroad for a time.

He said to himself that Sorel would understand his silence. Any girl of sense would perceive that further intercourse between them would be a mistake. Had he spoken—had he proposed? Well! he hardly knew. It was most likely that she had not taken it seriously; it was a great mistake to be serious; but it would be still worse, it would be confoundedly awkward, to write and tell a girl that you could not marry her. It was to imply that she wished to marry you, and that was little less than an insult. No, he could not do that; and so he went away, and Sorel heard no more of him. He travelled—he led a life of adventure and of a certain amount of hardship; he ventured his life freely as a thing which was of no account to anyone but himself, and upon which he himself could not conscientiously put a high price. He very rarely remembered Sorel Leigh. Of the seven years which he passed abroad he spent five in India. Once or twice, when at some distant station, he met with a girl fresh from England, and heard her commended or admired, he said to himself that she had not Sorel Leigh's beauty, nor her ready wit and spirited ways. Beside his remembrance of her, these girls seemed lifeless and insipid; but even that memory faded gradually from his mind. Perhaps he might have loved her, he was not sure; he had certainly never loved anyone else, but that was not her fault.

He very seldom heard from England. He had only one near relative, his mother's sister, a certain Lady Heathcote, a widow with whom he had never been upon any but the most distant terms of civility, and it was therefore a great surprise to him to receive a letter from her lawyer stating that she proposed to settle her fortune, which was considerable, upon him, on condition of his taking her late husband's name.

Giles thought it a very peculiar and absurd request, but he was a philosopher; one name, to his mind, was as good as another; and the money, as he reflected, was not to be despised.

'But I think that I shall go to England,' he said to his chief friend, a delicate, fair, and boyish hero, decorated for deeds of cold-blooded courage which had rarely been surpassed. 'At any rate, I shall go for a time.'

'And get married?' asked the young man laughing, as he lighted his cigar.

'I think not. Marriage is a lottery. I am not generally in luck. I should be sure to draw a blank.'

'That would be better than a wrong number. You might write your name upon it.'

'I should spoil the page,' the other answered with some seriousness. 'Good heavens! to think that five years ago I considered that any woman would be fortunate who married me!'

'She would be more fortunate now.'

'Possibly,' he answered shortly, and yet he knew that his friend was right. These years had done something for him. He was no longer a spoilt man of the world. Strangers only acquainted with his indifferent manners and his habits of life wondered at the attachment of his friends and the devotion of his servants; but to them alone were known the many acts of kindness and generosity which he hid from all but the recipients as if they had been crimes.

'Seven years,' repeated Warner, glancing up at him; 'you must be changed!'

Giles turned and looked at himself carelessly in the little shabby mirror above the fireplace. He saw a face naturally pale, but tanned by exposure to sun and weather; cheeks slightly sunken, rather by toil and travel than by ill-health; dark, penetrating eyes; a mouth veiled by a long moustache; hair close cropped, yet falling a little above the brow.

'Yes, I am altered,' he said, smiling. 'My best friends, if I had any in England, would hardly know me. This jacket,' touching the rough flannel, 'is as much like my coat of other days as I am like Giles Lister of seven years ago. My place will certainly know me no more.'

'Then why leave us?'

'Well! I have taken my passage. It would be a pity to waste the money. Besides, I may find when I have investigated the matter, that there is some legal flaw, and that I have changed my name to no purpose, and I do not think my aunt should be left to her own devices; she is very likely to be imposed upon. I hear she has recently adopted a sort of humble companion—a starving young lady artist; that looks bad.'

'It is all nonsense, however,' young Warner said to himself; 'I believe he is going because poor Sumner is invalided home in the *Columbia*, and he thinks he will have no one to look after him.'

But he knew his friend too well to speak his thoughts aloud.

CHAPTER II.

'It is a serious misfortune!' said Sorel Leigh to herself.

She was standing by the edge of the river, on the sloping lawn of the cottage which Lady Heathcote had taken for the summer. As her nephew had said, Lady Heathcote was eccentric. She liked to do things in her own way. Other people went out of London to their country houses, to the seaside, or abroad. Lady Heathcote had no country house of her own, and she disliked country house society, she detested a watering-place, and thought that no place out of England was fit to live in. She had no sentiment about love in a cottage, but when she left town she liked to be free from all the paraphernalia of riches. She left her cook and her menservants behind, and abjured morning calls and made-dishes. She had gone to this cottage on the Thames, accompanied only by her old housekeeper and by Sorel Leigh, to whom she had taken a great fancy. The girl was so unsuccessful and yet was making such a brave and cheerful struggle for existence, her poverty was so light-hearted and unobtrusive that it ceased to be a reproach to the more fortunate. She and Lady Heathcote suited each other exactly, and were passing the summer days together very agreeably when an unexpected announcement came to disturb their peace. Lady Heathcote's nephew and heir was coming home from India, and proposed to visit his aunt. He might arrive almost as soon as the letter which gave notice of his approach.

Yes, as Sorel said to herself, it was a serious misfortune. At any moment he might invade their quiet retreat, bringing with him the *gêne* of uncongenial companionship. 'A man, too,' cried Lady Heathcote, 'who was always absurdly luxurious. He will want a good dinner and a man to wait upon him. Just imagine, old Wilson will cook his dinner and Tommy will brush his clothes.' Old Wilson was the housekeeper and Tommy was the garden boy. 'Well! there is one comfort, he is not likely to stay long.'

'No, he is not likely to stay long,' echoed Sorel to herself.

She went slowly up the narrow garden path to the cottage porch. Within it there stood an easel with an unfinished drawing upon it, not a sketch of the house or the river, for Sorel was not a landscape painter. This was a fancy picture, illustrating a

fanciful idea—a man fighting his own shadow before a mirror. Like many young people, Sorel was apt to choose ambitious subjects; but she shook her head at the result of her efforts with a smile which was half-contemptuous and half-kindly. She was tolerant of her own failures, but she was not deceived. She had no great opinion of her own powers.

She found Lady Heathcote in her little sitting-room upstairs, sorting flower-seeds. She had a number of little packets spread out before her, and looked happy and busy. She knew nothing of gardening; that made it all the more interesting.

'There is such a delightful certainty about these matters,' she observed. 'You sow mignonette and you are quite certain that it will not come up groundsel. Now, how different it is in the moral world! You sow all kinds of good advice and virtuous resolves, and they come up as vices. You sow a joy, and it comes up a sorrow.'

> 'Alas! that joys, at noon so small
> Should make their evening shades so tall,'

quoted Sorel, softly.

'Ah, well! I should like to sow a joy in your life, my dear child,' cried the old lady.

'But according to your own experience that would be very dangerous,' answered Sorel. 'Still, tell me, if you were to act the fairy godmother, what would you give me? Tell me; I am curious.'

'I would give you a husband,' cried Lady Heathcote promptly —'a husband rich and kind and worthy of you, and it is very likely that you, in your ignorance and self-will, would spurn the gift.'

'Not at all,' answered Sorel. 'On the contrary, I can see that if such an unlikely person were to appear, and wish me to marry him, I should be most unwise to refuse—yes,' emphatically nodding her head, 'most unwise. There is only one man in the world who I am quite sure that I would not marry, even if he were as rich as the Marquis of Carabbas and had a list of merits as long as his pedigree.'

'Why, who do you mean?' The old lady looked up, alert and curious.

'It is no one whom you know,' answered the girl shortly. But a freak of memory brought before her inward vision a moonlit garden with the shadows falling black upon the turf, and two dark eyes full of love and laughter were looking down into hers,

and her faithless lover cried under his breath, 'Can you love me a little, Sorel?'

She had never forgiven him. She was thankful that she would never be obliged to look upon him again: he had done her at least one good service when he quitted England; yet, since he was alive, there was one man whom she would not forgive—whom she would never marry.

'I am sorry for him,' said Lady Heathcote, laughing, as she cast a glance upon the girl, which was at once shrewd, inquisitive, and admiring. In truth, Sorel was even handsomer than she had been seven years ago. Her blue eyes were deeper, her mouth had more varied expressions, but her smile when it came was as sweet and as frank as of old.

'It is a pity it should be all wasted on an old woman like me,' said Lady Heathcote to herself. 'Shall you be dull, if you are left alone here to-day?' she said aloud. 'I have just heard from my old friend, Mrs. Drummond. She writes to ask if I will spend a long day with her: and it is likely to be a very long one,' muttered the old lady to herself; 'but she has sent her carriage for me, and I cannot well refuse. Shall you be lonely?'

'Not in the least,' answered Sorel. 'I have my poor picture to finish, and some dressmaking to do. I shall be very busy; I shall'—smiling—'not miss you at all.'

It was barely eleven o'clock; the sun had not as yet dried up all the dew, nor banished the early freshness of the morning, though overhead, in a blue cloudless sky, he shone with undimmed splendour. Sorel stood for an instant looking after her old friend as she drove away, and then went up to the little sitting-room above the porch, set the window wide open, and took up her work. She would have liked to spend the day on the river; but poverty is a task-mistress, and Sorel, who could not afford to have her work done for her, had a new dress to finish. In the meantime, below in the garden, Mr. Giles Lister had pushed open the little wicket as if he were in the habit of entering that trim enclosure every morning of his life, and had sauntered up the cobbled path, looking leisurely about him.

The first thing which attracted his attention was the easel in the porch. 'Ah! the struggling artist,' he said to himself; 'and'—regarding the drawing—'ambitious, of course. What pleasure can my excellent aunt find in filling the place with budding genius? All roots and stalks, no flowers or fruit. Well! if the

incomprehensible is great, this ought to be a great picture. Two men fighting before a mirror: why, it is the same—the one a reflection of the other. This must be a philosophical genius: what can she mean? Shadow and substance, soul and body?'

On the stone bench a book lay open. He took it up and his eye fell upon a marked passage. 'Every soul is a twin star, born together in one frame. One twin is good, the other vile; hence the contradictions in man's nature and the constant strife with self.'

'So this poor painter is not even original, but has to illustrate other people's ideas. My twin,' cried Mr. Giles Lister to himself, 'must be a perfect saint if he is the reverse of me.'

He turned to the title-page; it might give him the artist's name.

Sorel Leigh! Gracious heavens! What fatality had brought her here?

He had almost forgotten her: no, not altogether forgotten. Somewhere in the background of memory there was an image of a girl, whom he might have loved, who might have loved him; and her name was Sorel Leigh. And with the rush of recollection there came a strong desire to see her once more face to face, to know if she were altered, and if she had forgiven him. But it was easy to answer that last question: if she were the same whom he had known she would do anything to escape from his presence; she would not remain even for a night under the same roof with him. And yet she should remain; he would not let her go so easily.

Once more his eyes fell upon the picture, and a happy inspiration flashed across his mind. She herself might teach him a lesson. He was not the Giles Lister who seven years ago had trifled with her affections and left her without remorse. That was his double, his twin brother, his toher self. He was now Mr. Heathcote; as much changed in person as in mind. Seven years older, tanned and altered, with a long moustache, which he had not worn in those other days, it was not likely that she would know him.

So, taking courage, he pulled the bell; but his ring was unanswered. Lady Heathcote had driven away half an hour ago. Old Wilson had slipped off to visit a friend in the village. Only Sorel was in the little sitting-room above the porch. As a more furious ring succeeded to the first, she called to Wilson to attend to the bell, but no Wilson answered.

How tiresome! It was the first time that anyone had called, and there was not a servant in the house to receive them; and it was a pity to set people gossiping about Lady Heathcote's eccentricities.

Then she, too, like the visitor below, had a happy inspiration. She snatched up one of Wilson's big aprons, tied it over her print dress, put up her hands to smooth her hair, and ran downstairs.

'Is Lady Heathcote at home?' asked a man's voice.

'Not at home, sir,' answered Miss Sorel with servantlike promptitude, preparing to take his card. Then suddenly lifting her eyes she saw standing upon the threshold the one man in the world whom she hoped she might never meet again.

CHAPTER III.

For an instant his self-possession deserted him. She was the Sorel Leigh of seven years ago—tall, slight, and proud—now, as always, the fairest woman he had ever known; and he—he was the man who had of his own free will deserted her.

'Mr. Lister!' she had exclaimed. He could not misunderstand the meaning of her tone. Yet he remembered an incident which only a few days ago had reminded him of the changes which time brings; his chance encounter with an old friend, his want of recognition, his excuses afterwards.

'You are a different man; I should not have known you,' he had said.

Sorel had been more clear-sighted. And yet——

'My name is Heathcote,' he said quietly. 'You' (smiling) 'must be Miss Leigh. I have heard of you from my aunt. Did she not tell you that she expected me?'

There was no trace in his manner of any remembrance of the past; yet, thrown off her balance by the shock and the surprise, she forgot that it would be truest wisdom to fall in with his tone.

'That she expected *you*?' she repeated. 'No! If she had said so——'

She broke off, and he surveyed her with an air of courteous surprise.

'If she had said so?' he repeated inquiringly.

'You would not have found me here,' she answered,

'Excuse me;' and he looked perplexed and a little amazed. 'But I do not understand. What have I done to justify such a prejudice? What can you have heard, since I have never had the honour of meeting you before?'

Sorel paused. She was recovering her self-possession, and with it her sense of the miserable mistake which she had made in alluding to the past he had more wisely determined to bury in oblivion. Yet, now that her error was irretrievable, she was too proud to shrink from the explanation he had challenged. Standing in the doorway, with one hand tightly closed over the edge of her coarse apron, she made her meaning clear.

'You know best for what purpose you deny our previous acquaintance,' she said. 'If it is lest it should prejudice you in your aunt's eyes, you need have no fear that she will learn it from me. We need not play to an empty house. I will only remind you that there was a time when *you* desired that our acquaintance should cease; and now, at least, I entirely concur in your views.'

Yet whilst she spoke, with her indignant eyes upon his face, she saw it change, and the expression of bewildered astonishment gave way to attention.

'I understand—I remember, now!' he cried. 'It must have been Giles. Are you not speaking of Giles Lister? Poor Giles!'

'But you are——you are Giles?'

'I am his elder brother.' And he sighed.

Sorel turned and looked at him with quick suspicion. It struck her the sigh was somewhat forced.

'Are you *sure* that it was your brother, Mr. Lister?'

'He was very like me,' he answered. 'It was a resemblance which often got me into trouble. You must be sure not to mention him to my aunt. There were circumstances——; in—in short, she never speaks of him.'

'She never spoke of any but one nephew,' answered Sorel.

'Exactly. And now, since this mystery is cleared up, and you find that we have had nothing to do with one another in the past, may we not start afresh?'

'Come in,' said Sorel, colouring.

Into what mistake had she not fallen. What revelations might she not have made to this stranger, who spoke with Giles's voice, and looked at her with his eyes! And the resemblance which had struck her at first faded as she looked more closely.

Giles had been handsome. This man—his brother—was different. A superficial likeness there was in the voice, the smile; but yet——

'Come in,' she repeated, a little shyly, leading the way into the house.

The drawing-room windows were open, and pleasantly shaded by the verandah, round which roses and honeysuckle had twined themselves in sweet and careless profusion. There were fresh chintzes upon the chairs, a great bowl of flowers on the table, and an air of rustic simplicity and cleanliness about the little dwelling.

'I am very sorry that Lady Heathcote is out. Indeed, she is out for the day,' observed Sorel, still hardly recovered from the embarrassment of her false step. 'She was asked to spend "a long day" with an old friend, and feared it would be long indeed.'

'Yes; how different it is with a new one,' answered Giles promptly.

'Not at all,' said Sorel, with quiet emphasis. 'I should not wish to spend a whole day in anyone's company. I should soon have nothing left to say. Will you ring if you want anything, Mr. Heathcote? Luncheon will be ready at one o'clock. I think you will find to-day's paper in the dining-room, if you have not seen it.'

'But you are not going to leave me by myself, Miss Leigh?'

'I am afraid there is no one else with whom to leave you.' But she could not help smiling at his tone of serious remonstrance. 'I am very busy to-day—particularly busy.'

'Do let me help you.'

'No thank you, you could not do that; but you might explore the country.'

'I should be sure to lose my way.'

'Then why not go on the river?'

'I should be most happy if you would come with me.'

'But I am really busy this morning,' answered Sorel, relenting a little. 'After luncheon, perhaps.'

'Is it not luncheon time now?'

'Not for an hour or more,' speaking decidedly, and retreating to the door, which in another moment she had closed behind her.

Giles stepped to the window and stood looking out, without seeing it, at the beauty of the summer morning. In what a predicament was he not placed! Sorel's sincere gaze demanded, and almost compelled, corresponding sincerity; and yet, when dis-

honoured by his own confession, should he not be at once dismissed and repudiated by the only woman he cared for? Yes, he was certain now there never had been—there never would be—another. What a fool he had been, he said to himself, to have weighed any worldly advantages in the balance with Sorel Leigh, and to have wasted seven years with Leah when he might have had his Rachel. And yet it was good luck for her. He was ready enough to own it now, when he wished that the Giles Lister of seven years ago were not only dead, but buried.

'Yet I might have a chance—just a chance,' he thought, 'if I could keep up the delusion; but my good aunt is so obtrusively righteous that she is sure to expose me. And if I am to win Sorel at all I must win her to-day.' And alas! the day was already half over. He was not so fainthearted as to give up the game for lost; but it was rather the instinctive aversion to a retreat than any hope of conquest which led him on. He took up her embroidery which lay upon the table, and laid it gently down again; he opened a book, only to throw it aside; then he smiled to himself and sighed, and wished that she would come back.

In the meantime, Sorel, in the little room above, paused with her needle in her hand, and smiled a little too, as a faint colour crept into her cheeks.

'He is not the least what I expected,' she said to herself. 'I thought Lady Heathcote's nephew would be commonplace. People generally are when they come home from India to inherit fortunes. But he is much more like a man who has lost one. He is not like other men. That is what I used to think of Giles Lister. I think I am glad that he is a little like him. Poor Giles!'

CHAPTER IV.

It was late afternoon. The quiet shadows were stealing over the river, underneath the drooping willows the insects hovered like a cloud above the water, but the western light still lay brightly on the level meadows beyond, and a boat was slowly drifting down the stream.

'So your life is sufficient for you?' asked Giles, and he leaned forward with his head upon his hands and his eyes upon the girl's fair face.

'I am not discontented,' she answered. 'Why should we ask

for so much when we give so little? Are not people a little unreasonable to expect the sweet without the bitter? I have no great sorrow in my life. I work hard, it is true, for little pay; but very likely I get as much as I deserve. People generally do. If no one cares for me very much, at least no one is unkind to me. I am poor, but I can earn my own bread. It is a moderate good fortune which I do not despise.'

'And you, the only child of a rich house,' thought the young man, 'who once had no wish which could not be gratified;' and his eyes grew grave and compassionate. And he could give her nothing, unless she would give him all.

'Lady Heathcote wrote to me that she wished to keep you always with her,' he said aloud.

'Yes, but I could not accept her offer. She is very good, but, such as it is, one must have a home of one's own.'

And she thought of her little rooms on a top floor in Bloomsbury, which were so cold in winter and so stiflingly hot in summer; and yet she would go back to them cheerfully and work on in her solitude, and she smiled bravely as she leaned over the side of the boat and drew her hand through the water.

'It is impossible!' murmured Giles to himself. 'No one to care for you. It is absurd.'

They had had luncheon together at a small square table, with a bowl of fresh roses between them: a modest little repast, set out by Wilson, upon which no servant attended. Together they had gathered plums in the walled-in garden; and then, when the fierce heat of the day was over, they had unloosed the boat from its moorings. Yes, and it was already evening, but the day had not seemed long. They had become more intimate than if they had been meeting casually in other people's company for months or years.

'Never mind,' said Sorel, just catching his last observation, and she lifted her head and smiled at him, 'I care for myself, at least, perhaps too much.'

'So you do not even value friendship?'

'Indeed I do,' she cried quickly. 'Some people are always units, and I am a unit; yet I have many friends.'

'So that you do not need—you would not even accept another? However humbly I might make my offer of friendship, you would not accept it?'

Sorel drew her hand out of the water and shook the drops from it.

'Friendship must be mutual,' she said, and then she laughed and added, 'Friends, Mr. Heathcote, are not made in a day.'

'No, but lovers are,' he said to himself, and it almost seemed as if he had spoken his thought aloud, for suddenly, as he looked at her, she changed colour and her eyes went down to the water as if to evade his gaze.

He took the oars and silently sent the boat upon its way. Each leaf of the tall osiers was clearly defined against the clear pale sky. Down far away in the west a bed of billowy clouds was ready to receive the setting sun, and already he had touched their edges and turned them into gold. And all unconsciously Sorel's thoughts had gone back to another summer seven years ago, and she was not angry with Giles Lister any longer.

'We must be turning home,' she said, suddenly. 'I had forgotten the time. Your aunt will have come back already, I am afraid.'

'So am I,' muttered Giles under his breath, reluctantly turning the boat.

He was glad to see how far they were from the landing-place; yet, after all, what a short time there was left. In another half-hour his deception would be infallibly exposed, and his last chance would be over.

'Miss Leigh,' he said, summoning up his courage, and with it, as he feared, an audacity which must for ever prejudice him in her eyes, 'I wonder if you would mind my asking if you have ever forgiven my brother?'

Some natural surprise at the question sent the blood to her face; but she would not, even for an instant, lower her eyes before him.

'Yes,' she answered, in her true and steady accents, 'I have forgiven him.'

'Was it—difficult?'

'I found it so,' she said, softly. Yes, all these long seven years she had never forgotten, and so she had never forgiven him.

'And why?' cried the young man, eagerly. 'And why?'

It seemed as if some constraint were upon her, compelling sincerity, but indeed it was so inherent in her nature that it could not in a moment be lightly put aside.

'I suppose—because I loved him,' she answered.

A light sprang into his eyes, and it seemed as if he were about to speak, but the words died upon his lips. He felt like a man who has shut the gate of heaven against himself and hears the clang of the heavy bolts within.

'That was so long ago,' he murmured after a pause.

'Yes,' she said, 'but I have never forgotten.'

'Yet now you say that you have forgiven, and since when?'

At length, as if recalled to the present from the memory of other days, she hesitated and faltered. How could she say that it was only since this stranger had knocked at her doors, only since he had looked at her with Giles's eyes and spoken to her with his voice, that the old bitterness had passed away and the old wound had been healed?

'I—I do not know,' she said in a low voice, and bent her head in her hands.

'Do *not* forgive him.' Giles spoke with a jar in his voice; he had dropped the oars, and they neither of them noticed that they were once more drifting down the stream. 'Since you could not forgive him because you loved him, do not forgive him now.'

She looked up startled, with a questioning wonder in her eyes. His head was uncovered, and one wave of his brown hair fell across his brow. Giles's hair had the same trick, she remembered, and now looking at his hands she noticed a single signet ring she had seen before. Was she awake or dreaming; was this swift stream carrying her back to the fairyland of the past, or was it truly her faithless lover who, risen from that grave where she had buried her young hopes, was once more looking at her with eager and yet hesitating entreaty?

'I told you truly,' he said. 'Giles Lister, from whom you parted seven years ago, will never come back. But I—have come in his place.'

'You had no right!' and she started to her feet, making the boat rock beneath her. The colour flushed in her cheeks, and the indignant tears sprang to her eyes. 'I did not know. For the second time you have deceived me. I believed you. I will never believe you again.'

'Take care,' cried Giles, stretching out his hand as her slight figure swayed as if she were about to lose her balance. 'Do not upset the boat. If there is to be an atonement, remember that the occasion demands but one victim.'

She sat down again in silence. 'Take me home,' she said, but she never looked at him as she spoke, and he took the oars and pulled towards the landing-place; if their progress was slow, she was too preoccupied to observe it.

'It was a great temptation,' said Giles, presently. 'It was

my only chance, and I took it. I do not regret it. I have at least cheated time. I have robbed him of the seven hours we have spent together, and they are mine, whatever may come after. Even you cannot take them back.'

'I have nothing to say to you, Mr. Lister.' But, in truth, she was altogether bewildered, her spirits were disturbed, and her mind in confusion. In another moment she felt that she might break into useless tears or undignified laughter. The past and the present were inextricably twined together, and every minute she became more conscious that the Giles Lister whom she had known, the Giles Lister whom she had loved, was once more at her side.

'Yet you must answer me one question,' he said; 'and even though this is to be the end—though this is to be all—I shall not regret it.'

For an instant she lifted her eyes to his face, and then hastily turned away; nor did he speak again until the boat grated on the steps at the bottom of the garden.

'Must I go away?' he said. 'Sorel, that is the question.' He had taken her hand as she stepped from the boat, and still kept the slight fingers fast in his. 'Do not send me away. Some day, perhaps, I may teach you to forget that you ever saw me before. It was as I told you (you yourself taught me the parable); it was my twin.'

'And, as I should be inclined to believe, your *better* self,' cried the girl, colouring as she drew her hand away, but nevertheless breaking into a laugh. 'Oh, yes, I remember. We never speak of him. . . . Do not mention him to my aunt . . . there were circumstances; it was a resemblance which brought frequent trouble upon you.'

'Let me help you to forget the Giles Lister that you knew,' cried the young man eagerly. 'Let us bury the past.'

'It is not so easy,' she answered softly. 'Giles Lister was worldly; he was selfish; he was faithless. But—I have never forgotten him. Poor Giles!'

And she smiled at him very sweetly. He took her hand and kissed it. Protestations seemed out of place. Her goodness had even silenced his regrets.

They walked up the narrow pathway through the garden, between the sweet peas and hollyhocks, and the sun sank down behind the hills, leaving a gleam of light upon the river as they entered the house together.

The Oven Islands.

A VISIT to certain islets in the Ægean Sea, which rejoice in the name of 'the Ovens,' was undertaken by us for the purpose of archæological research, pure and simple. Archæologists are accused of being slightly oblivious to passing events in the great absorption of their subject; and, perhaps, that was why it never occurred to us that, whilst war was pending between Greece and Turkey, and whilst the steamers which protect the coasts of Asia Minor had been removed for fear that the Greek population should steal them, the Oven Islands, with their wealth in harbourage and distance from government control, were not the safest place for Dr. Dryasdust and his wife to pitch their tent.

There are four Oven Islands lying close together, and I believe they owe their name to certain ancient rock-cut tombs which to the inhabitants look like ovens: only one of them is inhabited, and on this there is only one village, called Kroussæ, which consists of forty houses. The inhabitants, in fact, are all members of one family, over whom the common ancestor, Captain All Holy (Panagiotes), a retired sponge-fisher, rules supreme. It was a great pleasure to us to be plunged into a society so truly patriarchal as this was; to witness the respect paid to the eighty years which weighed but lightly on All Holy's shoulders; to hear how every voice was hushed when he spoke; how at the feast his was the first song, and how his advice was law in the councils held in the village church. He told us that he had been born in the Oven Islands, and that in his youthful days only four houses existed on the island. He delighted in recounting stirring incidents of the revolution, during which time the Ovens were the hotbed of piracy. He had had many sons and daughters born to him at Kroussæ, who in their turn had so increased the population that the number of houses had of necessity been multiplied by ten.

Husbands and wives had been imported from the adjoining

island of Nikaria, where everyone knows Captain All Holy, of the Ovens, and is proud to claim relationship with him by those strange ties of kindred which puzzle the uninitiated in the Greek social system; such as, 'fellow father-in-law,' 'fellow godfather,' and the like. Captain All Holy's family had originally emigrated from Patmos, a highly respectable island, which revels in traditions of St. John; consequently the importations from Nikaria are looked down upon; for no island in these seas has a worse reputation: its inhabitants are nomad charcoal burners, and so wedded to their primitive line of life that when on one occasion a Nikariote who had made some money at Smyrna returned home, bringing with him, amongst other comforts, a four-post bed, his compatriots were so scandalised by its appearance that they dragged it into the village square and reduced it to charcoal. Evil report also says that most of those hideous deformities which beg from you on the bridges at Constantinople are manufactured by heartless parents on Nikaria; so the descendants of All Holy have probably just cause for looking down upon their consorts who hail from there.

The male descendants of Panagiotes are either shepherds or sponge-fishers, whilst the females are remarkable only for their extreme simplicity and servile obedience to their husbands. They deal largely in magic and spells, and they hoard amongst themselves superstitions which have long ceased to exist elsewhere.

Those who witnessed our arrival one stormy wet evening in April received us with great effusion: it was raining in such torrents that it was out of the question to live in our tent; it was even impossible to proceed to the village. So we took refuge for the night in a tiny coffee-shop which Captain All Holy keeps down by the shore. Fifteen souls in all were collected in this apartment, not to mention dogs, cats, and hens; and as the night came on the storm so increased in fury that none of our comforts could be brought from our boat. We dined off a tin of lobster, and then resigned ourselves to be stared at, for the space of two hours, as those only can stare whose staring appetite has never been assuaged by exhibitions and wonders from all quarters of the globe; it was a simple child-like stare which meant no rudeness, but genuine delight. They left us at last in possession of the room. I lay on my ulster and on boards; my wife reposed in her hammock; and to our manservant Matthew we generously handed over the sole and separate use of All Holy's bed and its entomological treasures. Evils in the night are doubly hard to bear, and I never remember a dawn

more acceptable than that which shone on Kroussæ towards the close of last April, with a brilliant sun to dry us and the prospect of a cleaner home.

Up in the village we secured a largish room, out of which we turned every movable thing. We hired a woman to clean it, whose only dustpan was her own petticoat, and her only brush was nearly bald. After some hours' work it was raised to the rank of an exceedingly dirty English room; but we had our own beds and bedding and our own canteen, and thus we settled down in our Oven Island home. We had four windows without any glass in them, a door opening on to an outside staircase, and Matthew slept and cooked in a dirty hole below us. Our landlady, Mrs. Peace, was one of All Holy's eldest daughters. She had had fourteen children, she told us, in her day; seven of them were still living at Kroussæ, married, and with houses of their own, and three had 'gone to Hades.' She was a bustling, stirring woman, between fifty and sixty, whose great pride was having once been to Patmos and having said her prayers in the cave of the Apocalypse. She thought herself very lucky to have secured us as tenants, and was a constant visitor.

The next day was that dedicated to St. George, a holiday of course, so no workmen were to be found who would accompany us to the proposed site of our explorations. I was exceedingly glad to see the so-called Κάρα fires which, on the vigil of St. George, were lit at Kroussæ: it was a weird sight to see the women and children dancing around them and singing, 'Get out, ye fleas! get out, ye bugs! get out, ye mighty rats!' It is a superstition, connected, I suppose, with St. George's mythical victory over the dragon, that he has likewise power to destroy the smaller tormentors of the human race. I was told that a similar performance is gone through on St. George's other day in November; and, as circumstances turned out, I was not sorry for the opportunity of remaining for the feast day in the village.

St. George's Church, with its bell hung to a tree outside, looked very gay: it had been newly whitewashed for the occasion; its floor was strewed with myrtle and sweet-smelling herbs, and its picture of St. George was dressed up in a new piece of chintz for the occasion. As the service proceeded I looked at this picture, which represents St. George on a winged horse piercing the dragon, whilst the princess and the flocks stood trembling by; and as I looked I thought how kindred are the legends of Christendom to those of heathen days when read here on their native soil. Who is St. George but Perseus? Is not the horse Pegasus? The

princess is Andromeda, and your story is almost complete. Perseus for merry England would sound odd enough to our ears, and still odder would it be to tell the aristocracy of England that they had been married in a temple of Perseus not far from Hanover Square.

The amusements for the evening were simple but characteristic: the men assembled together in a shady garden, cut up a lamb into tiny pieces, and boiled the bits in a caldron which cast a savoury odour far and wide. When they had eaten enough, and drunk and sung songs to their hearts' content, they joined the ladies, who had hitherto only dared to peep occasionally at the lords of creation over the garden wall; and then dancing began—the strange singing dances of Nikaria, in which men and women revolve in a long wavy circle, singing as they move part-songs more monotonous than beautiful, and our earlier slumbers were disturbed by the sound of bagpipe and lyre and the discordant yells of inebriation.

We went to our work next morning, taking with us our tent, our provisions, and ten workmen; we were rowed in a boat some dozen miles to the site of our proposed excavations—a hillock by the sea, on which had formerly stood a marble temple. That we slept peacefully in our tent when the workmen left us all alone for the night, that we rejoiced in the cleanliness and solitude which surrounded us, we owed to our ignorance rather than to our courage. I fancy that if we had known of the arrival of a certain two-masted caïque in the harbour of Kroussæ that evening, and of its object, we should not have slept so well, and we should not have enjoyed our evening stroll amongst the rocks and brushwood. Luckily for us our researches were not crowned with success; the spot was not a promising one; so we decided to return to the village on the following morning. As we entered the harbour the new arrival at once arrested our attention. 'She is quite a fine boat,' we said to each other. 'We must try and secure her for our return voyage,' I innocently remarked to our boatmen; but they shook their heads mysteriously; there was evidently something wrong about her, for she had no flag and her colour of dark chocolate did not look prepossessing.

There was much confusion and secret talking when we got on shore. All Holy's coffee-shop was full, and so was his son's up in the village, and amongst the company we soon recognised the strangers, ill-conditioned, European-dressed men. Mrs. Peace was the first to tell us all about them. It was a well-known pirate

boat which often paid the Oven Islands a visit. Karabas, a Samiote of evil reputation, who had murdered a man in Syra only a few weeks before, was their captain, and his crew of twenty-two men were selected from amongst the greatest ruffians of the neighbouring islands. They were all armed to the teeth, and, concluded she, 'they have even got torpedoes on board to prevent anyone from venturing alongside.' Their object this time in visiting the Ovens was to capture the English archæologists, and of this object they made no secret when conversing in the *café*.

Our position we at once recognised as highly critical; we hardly dared to think of the night we had spent in solitude in our tent; and our only chance of safety now lay in support from the Oven Islanders. By great good-luck, Mrs. Peace's son-in-law had a small store close to our house, and, moreover, he had some money by him; consequently the presence of pirates disturbed him almost as much as it did us; and to this fact I firmly believe we owed the allegiance of the islanders.

Towards evening we held a council of war in the church, at which were present Captain All Holy, two of his sons, the demarch, who had married the captain's third daughter, the two Turkish soldiers, who feebly represented their Government on the Ovens, my servant Matthew, and myself. The Greeks were loud in their protestations of good faith; the Turks merely looked on in a cynical fashion and said nothing whilst we examined their guns and pronounced them valuable only as firewood. Besides these we found that there were twelve other guns on the island, all of them more formidable in appearance than reality.

It was agreed that a little army of Oven Islanders, under the generalship of our servant, who, to our comfort, we knew was an excellent shot, should be formed for our protection. Every available weapon was to be produced, and our house was to be barricaded and surrounded by our faithful followers. Captain All Holy concluded the proceedings by stating, 'Nothing more can be done to-night; to-morrow the demarch shall demand of Captain Karabas his papers, and state that a steamer is daily expected from Chios in pursuit of pirates.' Greeks are always ready with a lie, and the old man's stratagem met with universal applause.

When I reached home I found my wife and Mrs. Peace hard at work with the barricades: large stones were being carried up to our room with which to block up the windows; the door, which was decidedly a weak point, was being mended; and women were gathered in clusters outside, who, being far behind Mrs. Peace in courage, could do no more than lament the calamity which they felt sure

was impending. In spite of the circumstances we could not help laughing at the misery of Mrs. Peace's daughter-in-law, a gaunt, unkempt young woman, who was married to the storekeeper. The exigencies of the position had quite bereft her of any senses she may ever have had, and she went about exclaiming, 'O mother-in-law! Ianakki must axe the corpse.' Mrs. Peace would not explain this statement to me until I pressed her warmly, and then she told me how her daughter-in-law was only a Nikariote, and that those despised islanders believe that if a misfortune falls on anyone it is because he has been at enmity with a man who has died. The only way to avert calamity is to go at night, exhume the body, and break up the bones with an axe. The Bishop of Samos, whose spiritual jurisdiction extends to Nikaria, has nearly succeeded in putting down this miserable superstition; but in remote places like the Ovens superstition is more powerful than episcopal mandates.

At length darkness came on, and with it horrors innumerable. No one went to bed, and the whole village was wide-awake. Men in great homespun coats paraded in front of our house, and we almost felt as if we were at a play, and were incapable of realising the grim horrors of our situation. Occasionally a story I had heard of a pirate boat which in these very waters had boarded a caïque, robbed the captain and his two mates, tied them to the masts, and scuttled the boat would flit across my mind; but I think at the time the novelty of our position was rather agreeable than otherwise. The noises of that night were something awful. Every dog on the island barked at the unusual disturbance; the men made use of a weird-sounding instrument they call a *bourlas* —just a thick reed hollowed out with which they are accustomed to call one another when out on the mountains or when they get separated at sea. It has a deep, unearthly sound—somewhat akin to an Australian bull-roarer—and I am sure we were more alarmed at this than at the idea of pirates.

Nothing happened during the night, and with the morning our confidence returned. With consummate cheek Karabas and some of his men not only came ashore, but came to take stock of us; and as they did so we took care to show them our six-chambered revolvers. 'Even the woman is armed,' they were overheard to say; and I doubt if this inspection of us gave them satisfaction. Matthew went to the *café* and entered into conversation with them. 'Where are they going?' was asked. 'To Patmos,' was the reply; a most deliberate falsehood, for we were bound in the other direction.

'When will they go?' Immediately was the reply. But from this conversation we gathered no encouragement, for it suggested the disagreeable idea that the pirates, finding we were so well protected in the Ovens, intended to waylay us on our voyage; and as the thought occurred to us we cursed our folly for allowing our zeal for antiquities to lead us into such a trap.

Captain All Holy's plan was crowned with apparent success; Karabas and his men took alarm at once, and by twelve o'clock that day we had the satisfaction of seeing the hated caïque spread her sails and leave the harbour of the Ovens. We agreed that it would not be safe to take our departure for some days to come, for we felt sure our movements would be watched; and to ascertain the movements of the enemy we dispersed our soldiers all over the hills. Some brought back word that she had sailed for Nikaria, others that they had seen her on her way to Samos. Opinions were greatly at variance, but, notwithstanding, great ease and contentment came over us that evening, and before nine o'clock we were in bed, sleeping the sleep of the wearied.

We had not been asleep long—two hours at the most—when a loud hammering at the door below awoke us. 'The pirates are coming,' was the cry which accosted our stupefied senses. It passed rapidly from man to man, and from house to house: dogs barked, women screamed, *bourlas* roared, the village of Krousse was a scene of the wildest confusion. General Matthew was up in no time. I never knew him undress during the three winters he has travelled with us; in fact, night garments are so little known in the Greek islands, that unless I give special orders to the contrary, the washerwomen, if they possess starch, insist on putting it into the collars and cuffs of my nightgown. He had his little army in marching order in no time, and they started off towards the cape, behind which the shepherd who had given the alarm said he had seen the pirate ship hiding. And there they found her sure enough, just in the act of sending a boatload of men to the shore.

General Matthew is a man of prompt action; so without further delay he gave orders to his men to fire, although the enemy was as yet out of reach of gunshot. The manœuvre was attended by immediate success, for the pirates at once took alarm and rowed back to their ship; and our soldiers had not long to wait before they saw the sails unfurled again and Captain Karabas and his crew putting out once more to sea. The intentions of our enemy were obvious. They had thought to take us unawares in the night, but seeing their plan was discovered, and not wishing to run the risk of encountering so effectual an opposition as the

Oven Islanders afforded, they thought discretion the better part of valour, and sailed away.

But though we felt grateful in the extreme for our escape, and very charitably disposed towards the shepherd who had been the means of saving us, nevertheless ugly thoughts for the future confronted us: we were still on the Oven Islands, and the nearest point of safety was at least six hours' sail with a favourable wind. We could not live for ever where we were, though the inhabitants kindly expressed a wish that we should do so. The only thing for us to do, we said to ourselves over and over again, was to have patience. A little time amongst the Oven Islanders would be instructive; there were ancient remains on the hill above Kroussæ; we would excavate; and we would improve our acquaintance with the inhabitants, for whom we now felt a special liking, since they had been so active in our defence; and when we finally left the Ovens we would do so in the dark with a favourable wind behind us: and for this combination of circumstances we resigned ourselves to wait.

If it had not been for a sense of danger which we could not altogether stifle, I think we should have been thoroughly happy on the Ovens. When tired of our friends in the valley we could flee to the mountains and enjoy delicious views over the island-dotted sea. Within an easy walk of our home, high up on the hillside, was a *mandra*, that is to say, an enclosure for flocks, and adjoining it was the shepherd's hut; and if we presented ourselves there just after the morning milking we were sure of being offered a brimming gourd of milk, and then we could watch the process of cheese-making with primitive instruments, which have in no way altered since the days of ancient Hellas. The austerities of the Lenten fast were now over, and the shepherds were busy making themselves cakes, for the recipe of which you have but to turn to the pages of Æschines, who describes certain 'cakes composed of butter, flour, and aromatic herbs,' which the islanders of his time made. I ate one of these, though it was hard and heavy, and strongly flavoured with fennel, chiefly because I wished to partake of food so truly classical; and for the rest of our stay on the Ovens we were burdened with gifts of them from the kindly inhabitants, and the secret disposal of these, so as not to hurt the feelings of the donors, formed the object of many a mountain walk.

With a *mandra* close to us affording an abundance of milk and kids our table was never badly supplied; of course we had no vegetables save onions and salads of mountain herbs; and then honey was abundant, and so was fish; but, after all, my favourite

delicacy—and I am not ashamed to own it—was snails: fresh spring snails boiled with rice mixed well with olive oil, and served with hairpins to effect the extraction, forms a dish which those who have the courage to try will never have cause to repent. One of our friends had a garden which was particularly prolific in edible snails, and we were invited to go and catch snails therein in much the same spirit that in England one is invited to a good day's fishing in a favoured stream. 'It has horns, yet it is not a cow; it carries a saddle, yet it is not an ass': this is a specimen of Oven Island wit relating to snails.

The first of May found us still prisoners on the Oven Islands; and though getting slightly impatient of our detention we were glad to have an opportunity of seeing how gaily they decked their houses and balconies on this occasion with flowers and ears of corn; a little festival which seems common all the world over and in all ages, a pretty homage paid to the fructifying influence of spring, as represented in the ancient world by floral offerings to Demeter. We were told, rather mysteriously, I thought, that this was the eve of St. Athanasius, but the information conveyed nothing to my mind beyond a passing recognition of the curious fact that the saint's day, whose name signifies immortality, should be identical with a festival which is symbolical of the perpetuation of vegetable life; and if I had not luckily noticed the young women of Kroussæ busy in conclave, as if in contemplation of some event, I fancy we should have left the Ovens without discovering that a quaint and interesting ceremony was being performed under our very noses.

The day of St. Athanasius is one of great importance to the maidens of the Ovens, for on this day, by a curious process, they divine who is to be their future husband. Elsewhere in Greece they do this on the eve of St. John's Day, but here, for some unknown reason, they have chosen for the ceremony the two first days of May. Preparations for the divination were being made when I discovered them on the vigil of the saint. The maidens collect together in one house, each bringing a present for the girl at whose home the divination takes place. These gifts generally take the form of food for the feast on the morrow, whilst one brings meal which, when passed through a sieve, is converted into salt cakes, the use of which we shall presently discover. When all preliminaries are settled they despatch the three youngest amongst them to three of their friends who bear the name of 'Peace,' a curiously favourite name on the island: these three Peaces fill small jars with water from the well without speaking, and take them to

the maidens in their house; the water is poured into a big jar, around which they sit, and cast into it flowers, gold or silver ornaments, and each maiden is careful to bear in mind the article she has thrown in. Before separating for the night this jar is put on the roof, that it may 'see the stars,' as the expression goes, and they try to do this without letting any of the young men see, for there is a tradition amongst them that on one of these occasions the young men played the annoying practical joke of stealing the ornaments, and thereby rendering the divination abortive.

The maidens all returned home when it was dark. Somehow they seemed rather ashamed of the proceeding, and I do not wonder at it. Next day at dawn they reassembled at the same house, and from this time till midday they were mysteriously engaged at their work. The doors were closed, and ingress was forbidden even to the inquisitive English; however, we heard them singing in low monotonous voices from without, and were told that during this time they continue to stir the jar and all that was within it. Occasionally their songs would be accompanied by the beating of a brass dish, the true meaning of which mystic rite I was unable to gather from my married female informants.

When the hour of midday arrived the singing and the stirring ceased, for the time of feeding had come; and, shocking to relate, they are in the habit of drinking so much wine at this meal that they approach intoxication, and when reduced to the condition of Bacchic Mænads they eat the salt cakes and lie around the room to sleep. This is called the 'divination sleep,' and during its continuance they suppose that they have revealed to them in dreams the person of their future husband, though the name is not as yet disclosed to them. When all are awake and recovered from the effects of the meal, they again seat themselves around the jar in a circle, and sing a strange couplet, which may be roughly translated as follows:—

> Awake, now, O jar, and sleep not so hard,
> And by sleeping too much divination retard;
> For still all the mountains are covered with snow,
> And there is my love whose name I don't know.

The youngest girl is now deputed to draw out the articles from the jar one by one, and as this is done a verse is sung by each maiden in turn, which contains some punning allusion to a man's name; for example, *νικᾶ ὁ λαός* (the people conquers) is easily understood to be Nicholas, and the girl whose article is drawn out as the verse is sung takes it to herself, ponders over it

like the ancients pondered over the utterings of a Delphic oracle, and imagines that her future husband will bear the name alluded to in the verse. With this concluding ceremony the divination of St. Athanasius is brought to an end, the doors are thrown open, and a man who plays the bagpipe is summoned to attend; no sooner are his hideous strains heard through the village than the young men begin to stroll in, and the evening, according to the invariable custom, is devoted to dancing.

We found the Oven Islanders very great people for amusements; the children, the young men, and sometimes even the old play games on the beach much as our youngsters do on the village green; and they play many games, too, which we know well in England. Is it that men's minds, when intent on sport, will arrive at pretty much the same conclusion all the world over? I think so, for I am sure that if any traveller has ever visited the Oven Islands he never took the trouble to teach the inhabitants oranges and lemons, blind man's buff, and games of a kindred nature, which we saw under different names certainly, but played in much the same fashion on the beach.

Most of the games partook of rather a bellicose nature, and bore testimony to the hardiness and spirit of our friends. A game called 'war' is distinctly of this nature, and is a great favourite amongst the adult population. Two sides are chosen, the 'ups' and the 'downs,' say ten on each side, and hostile camps are pitched about thirty yards apart; having previously come to a decision as to which side is to commence firing, the general of the 'ups' marshals his men in a row, takes a ball in his hand, and when the signal for the commencement of hostilities is given hurls it with all his might on the 'downs.' If it is caught before it falls, one of the 'ups' has to go over to the camp of the 'downs' as prisoner of war; he is henceforth termed a beast of burden. They jump on his back and ride him up and down in triumph; if, however, as it frequently happens, it is not caught, the prisoner who is hit has to go from the camp of the 'downs,' and receives similar treatment. The next shot takes place from the opposite side, until not a man is left. There was always great excitement, we noticed, when only one was left in each camp, and the victory generally fell to the thrower of the ball.

Whilst their elders were thus engaged, the more juvenile portion of the population were to be seen hard by engaged in a game of an equally rough nature. Four of them, with their arms linked and their backs outwards, were dancing slowly round in a circle, singing as they went; to one of them was attached a red

girdle, the other end of which was held by another boy, whose duty was to prevent the rest of the players from jumping on the backs of those who were singing; if anyone succeeded in doing so the boy with the girdle was defeated and gave place to another. Scarcely any of their games are without this jumping on the back as a sign of victory and humiliation to the vanquished; rough treatment and blows naturally ensue, and all are borne with the greatest good-nature. I never once saw them squabble over this class of game; in this point they differ from English children. It is very different, however, when money is at stake. In the game of *omades*, a form of pitch and toss, or in the *cafés*, where the men fight over their cards and labyrinth games, the disputes often take alarming proportions. In this characteristic they are Greek, and undoubtedly theirs is the sensible view to take of the matter; squabble only when there is something substantial to be gained by so doing.

Anybody wishing for a study in Greek human nature could have no better opportunity than we had when watching these islanders on Sunday afternoon at their games by the shore. The next best place for this study is the *café*, where every bargain, however small, is transacted to the soothing warble of the narghili. One day we sent round the bellman, here called 'the herald,' to tell the inhabitants of the Ovens to bring to the *café* any embroideries, old plates, or curiosities that they might have in their possession; and it was there that they tried to convince us that a rather battered English penny had been found in an ancient tomb, and that the owner had been offered a gold piece for it in Smyrna; and yet I verily believe that if we had offered for it Turkish coins, sufficient to make a halfpenny, on the day of our departure, the owner would have run after us to the boat to effect the change.

The day, or rather night, came at last when we felt it expedient to quit our prison, and before the rising of the sun we were once more under the protection of the principality of Samos.

Apparently it was no surprise to the Samiotes when we told them that Karabas and his crew had been after us. His boat had been seen on its way to the Ovens, and our visit there was known to everyone on Samos; but, with the usual apathy of the East, no steps were taken to pursue him until we had said some exceedingly unpleasant things to the authorities. Whether our enemy was ever caught or not we did not hear, nor do we now so much care.

J. THEODORE BENT.

On the Belfry Tower.

A SKETCH.

'LOOK down the road. You see that mound
Rise on the right, its grassy round
Broken as by a scar?'
We stood,
Where every landscape-lover should,
High on the gray old belfry's lead,
Scored with rude names, and to the tread
Waved like a sea. Below us spread
Cool grave-stones, watched by one great yew.
To right were ricks; thatched roofs a few;
Next came the rectory, with its lawn
And nestling schoolhouse; next, withdrawn
Beyond a maze of apple boughs,
The long, low-latticed Manor-house.
The wide door showed an antlered hall:
Then, over roof and chimney stack,
You caught the fish pond at the back,
The roses, and the old red wall.
Behind, the Dorset ridges go
With straggling, wind-clipped trees, and so
The eye came down the slope to follow
The white road winding in the hollow
Beside the mound of which he spoke.

'There,' said the Rector, 'from the town
The Roundheads rode across the down.
Sir Miles—'twas then Sir Miles's day—
Was posted farther south, and lay
Watching at Weymouth; but his son—
Rupert by name—an only one,

The veriest youth, it would appear,
Scrambling about for jackdaws here,
Spied them a league off. People say,
Scorning the tedious turret-way,
(Or else because the butler's care
Had turned the key to keep him there),
He slid down by the rain-pipe. Then,
Arming the hinds and serving-men
With half-pike and with harquebuss,
Snatched from the wainscot's overplus,
Himself in rusty steel-cap clad,
With flapping ear-pieces, the lad
Led them by stealth around the ridge,
So flanked the others at the bridge.
They were but six to half a score,
And yet five crop-ears, if not more,
Sleep in that hillock. Sad to tell,
The boy, by some stray petronel,
Or friend's or foe's—report is vague—
Was killed; and then, for fear of plague,
Buried within twelve hours or so.

'Such is the story. Shall we go?
I have his portrait here below:
Grave, olive-cheeked, a Southern face.
His mother, who was dead, had been
Something, I think, about the Queen,
Long ere the days of that disgrace,
Saddest our England yet has seen.
Poor child! The last of all his race.'

AUSTIN DOBSON.

Marrying and Giving in Marriage.

By Mrs. Molesworth,

Author of 'Hathercourt Rectory,' 'Carrots,' &c.

CHAPTER XI.

AVELINE woke the next morning with a terrible headache. Unusual emotion or exertion was apt to result in this species of suffering with her. Many a time as a child, when some lesson difficulty—for, though gifted with intellectual capacity considerably above the average, she was not a quick or very ready learner—or sharp reprimand from her mother had sent her sobbing to bed, had the morning found her so overwhelmed with pain as to be for the time unable to take in the sense of anything said to her.

This was the case the day after her strange and painful interview with Sir Francis Ayrton.

It was 'most unfortunate,'—'tiresome and provoking' were the real words in her heart—said Lady Christina when Lady Ayrton called, as had been arranged, to drive Aveline and her mother on a round of shopping. 'She has not had such a headache for years. I saw it coming on the day before yesterday, at the marriage. Foolish child, she is far too impressionable. She was quite upset by seeing the ceremony.'

'Poor dear—I love her all the more for it,' said Lady Ayrton. 'But you will not like to leave her then, Christina? We must put off our expedition till to-morrow or the day after.'

'Oh, no,' Aveline's mother replied; 'she is best left alone in perfect quiet. I understand these headaches. I believe they can be thrown off by a person of great energy and resolution. I myself should be often ill if I *let* myself be so. But Aveline is different. She has much more of the Verney *laissez aller* about her. Why, both my husband and Bart Verney go down like lead

if one of their little fingers aches. And Avé is just the same. They think themselves dying on the smallest provocation.'

'But Aveline does not feel so ill as all that, I trust?' said Lady Ayrton, anxiously. 'Should you not send for the doctor, Christina? It may be the beginning of typhoid fever, or gastric fever, or who knows what.'

'Oh, no, I have seen her too often like that. She will be all right in a day or two, or even sooner if she can get a good sleep. Leo is watching beside her. I assure you the only thing to do is to leave her alone. I am really not uneasy, Sophia.'

Of which Sophia was already only rather too well assured.

'And what is Wilfred about this morning?' said Lady Christina, amiably, as she settled herself comfortably in her friend's luxurious landau. Material well-being always had a soothing effect upon the nerves of Aveline's mother. 'I thought he spoke of coming with us.'

'So he did,' said his mother. 'But he put his head in at the door of my room while I was dressing to come out, to say he could not possibly come. He was shut up with his father for some time this morning. They are busy arranging all about Garthdean—the tiresome part of it, I mean. The *nice* part will come afterwards. I expect Sir Francis will give Aveline *carte blanche* about refurnishing it.'

'How delightful,' exclaimed Lady Christina, with effusion. 'Dear Sir Francis, how very generous he is!'

Poor woman! a very few hours sufficed to bring a dolorous change over the spirit of her dream.

That afternoon, Mr. Verney was summoned to a private talk with Sir Francis Ayrton. At dinner-time he was silent and preoccupied in manner, but a very close observer might have detected a shade less of anxiety in his expression than had been there of late.

'How is Avé?' he asked, somewhat abruptly, of his wife.

'Oh, it will go off by the morning, I have no doubt,' she replied easily. 'She seemed asleep quietly enough an hour or two ago.'

'If she is not decidedly better to-morrow morning, you must send for a doctor,' said Mr. Verney. 'She has not spoken to you much to-day?'

'Not at all,' said Lady Christina. 'She seemed just to want to stay quiet. She is always like that when she has these headaches.'

Mr. Verney said nothing for a minute or two. Then—dinner was nearly over by now—he looked up again.

'Christina,' he said, 'I have a good deal to talk to you about this evening. Can you arrange to be quite uninterrupted?'

'Certainly,' she replied, with some surprise. 'Is it about the settlements on Aveline? Sophia told me Sir Francis would be wanting to talk over business matters with you some day soon.'

'He sent for me this afternoon, but it was not to talk about the settlements,' said her husband. 'However, we had better go into the drawing-room.'

He rose as he spoke, and held open the door for his wife to pass through.

Lady Christina's maid was surprised and rather offended that evening by the peremptory way in which she was rung for, only to be told that she was not required and might go to bed.

'There's something hup,' she said to herself, as she slowly mounted the *escalier de service* to the *sixième*, where, on condition of a handsome present on their return to England, she had agreed to sleep, instead of rushing back to London the day of their arrival, as she had at first threatened. 'And I don't see as my lady need be so short with me, considering the hinterest I feel in the family—especially in Miss Verney, poor dear. There'll be something to be thankful for if she's not down with typhud fever, as it's called nowadays. And no wonder if it were, with these queer ways of living—families one on the top of another like berths in a steamer—which it stands to reason can't be wholesome.'

She was not a bad-hearted woman, and Lady Christina was not a bad mistress, and she could hardly have helped pitying Aveline's mother had she seen her, as she then was—sobbing, weeping bitter tears of disappointment at the news her husband had told her, that her daughter's engagement to Wilfred Ayrton was once for all and irrevocably broken off.

'And what are we to do about Chris—and all the other troubles?' had been her first exclamation, when she had realised the terrible fact.

'I don't know. I can't say. But at least we shall not have sold—yes, *sold*—our daughter, Christina,' was his reply.

He had promised Sir Francis, for Aveline's sake, to say nothing to stir up any avoidable bitterness on his wife's part. And except for this one outburst, he had controlled himself well.

Lady Christina burst into tears.

'How can you speak so cruelly?' she sobbed out. 'You know my motives, Owen. I only want to do the best for our children.'

'Then be thankful that Fate, or Providence, has thwarted what could never have turned out a best for the eldest, and I can almost say, the dearest of them,' he replied sternly.

'I cannot help feeling as if it were Aveline's fault,' she said to herself afterwards, when alone, 'though I have given my word not to resent it to her. And perhaps she is not to blame. It must be something seriously wrong with Wilfred Ayrton for his own father to take part against him, as it were. But it might as well have waited to come out till they were married. For then, whatever it had been, they would have had to take care of Aveline. No, I cannot help it. I *do* feel as if it were her doing, and I must not show it. After all my exertions for her, it is *too* hard.'

She was not of a temperament to sob herself to sleep like her daughter, she lay awake nearly all the night, longing for the morning, and was up and about earlier than usual, finding in restless energy only any relief from her aching disappointment.

The first post brought a letter from her friend. Its handwriting was of the shakiest; it was blurred and blotted with tears.

'You will know by your own feelings what I am suffering,' wrote poor Lady Ayrton—'or rather you cannot know. Without selfishness I must say it is far, far worse for me than for you. It seems to me that till now I had never realised to the full what hopes I had built on the project so cruelly dashed to pieces. But I have promised Francis to say very little, and it is true it would be useless. We are leaving Paris almost immediately. I shall look forward to seeing you, dearest Christina, in England before long, when perhaps a little time may have soothed the present bitterness of regret.'

'Worse for her than for me, indeed,' said Lady Christina. 'Sophia is more than half a fool, but that I always knew. Worse for her than for me, indeed! Has she seven children, and none of them provided for in any way; an income on which it is *impossible* to live; a husband who has no sympathy, and is as obstinate as a mule once he takes up a notion? It's no worse for her about her son than it has always been. Every one has known since he was a schoolboy that he was a coarse, selfish young brute, and Sophia need not pretend to have discovered his delinquencies for the first time. But I must answer it, I suppose; and by-the-bye, I had better go and see how Aveline is, as she particularly asks for news of her.'

For, in a postscript, Lady Ayrton entreated to be told if 'dear Aveline's' headache had left her.

It had not done so. She was very little, if at all better than the day before. Lady Christina began to feel a little anxious. Provoked and irritated as she was, she could not but be conscious of a pang of pity as Aveline looked up with her sad, tired eyes, as if apologising for being ill, and tried to say she was better.

'I am so sorry, mamma,' she whispered, the tears welling out as she said it. With the rupture of her engagement, with the knowledge of the keenness of her mother's disappointment—for Leonora had noticed enough at breakfast that morning to be able to assure her sister that 'mamma knew'—the hard cold indignation of the last few weeks had melted away. She felt herself to be, as it were, deserving of Lady Christina's wrath; weak and worn out by all she had gone through, she was almost ready to fall back into the old groove of well-nigh slavish submission.

'I don't mind how harsh mamma is to me,' she said to Leo. 'I will bear anything, I am so sorry for her; and the worst of it is I know I must *always* now be a source of disappointment to her. For I don't think I shall ever marry, Leo—and that is the only thing I could have done to please her. If I could—if I might but work for her and for you all! Oh, if only I were a man!'

But such thoughts only aggravated her suffering—and then the terrible headache, except at rare intervals, almost deadened her. She was to be kept perfectly quiet at all costs, the doctor said, otherwise he would not answer for the consequences. And Leo, a born sick-nurse, managed to soothe her by saying they would talk it all over afterwards, there was no telling what plans they might not think of for really helping poor mamma—what Avé had to do now was to lie still and try to get well.

And by slow degrees the pain began to decrease, and the symptoms of brain disturbance to disappear.

'She will do now,' said the doctor, 'provided, that is to say, you continue to keep her out of the way of any excitement. A change to the country would be the best thing if you could possibly manage it.'

And Mr. Verney, as he kissed his daughter, telling her cheerily that all would be right, now that she was going to be a sensible girl and get well, wished indeed it were possible.

But material cares were pressing heavily on him, poor man, at this time. A few weeks would bring his mission to Paris to an end, and it was already only too clear that the expenses of the

family sojourn there would be considerably in excess of the extra pay. It had been found absolutely necessary to place Chris with a private crammer, if he were to have any hope of passing his examination for Woolwich; and Arthur, the second boy, would be leaving school at Midsummer, and nothing had been decided as to his career. Then the younger ones, there was no denying, were 'coming on' at an alarming rate. And Bart Verney, the kindest of brothers, had done all he could, more almost than he was justified in doing. Where to turn for help to tide over the present crisis Lady Christina's husband truly did not know.

In any case country air for Aveline was out of the question.

'She will go back to London looking infinitely worse than when she came away. I wish I had come over here alone and left them all safe at home. It would have saved some money, too, and this wretched business would never have come about,' thought the father, though in the bottom of his heart he was not without a shrewd suspicion that this very 'business'—the prospect of its coming to pass, that is to say—had been at the root of Lady Christina's determination to transport the whole family across the Channel.

But there is great comfort in the truism that at the worst things must take a turn. They had got to the worst apparently by this time with the Verneys. For just as Aveline began to creep about again, thin and languid, grateful with a half-shrinking gratitude, painful to see, for her mother's somewhat grudgingly-bestowed kindness, and Lady Christina had added up the Paris bills for the twentieth time in vain hopes that she had over-estimated their amount, down came a good fairy in the shape of faithful old Madame de Boncœur, full of sympathy, curiosity, genuine concern, and, most valuable of all, practical readiness to help.

'I have known nothing,' she said. 'Since the marriage a fortnight ago'—was it only a fortnight ago? thought Aveline, from her sofa in the corner of the room—'Alice and I are at Château Villers, her little place near Montmorenci—shut up, seeing no one. We wanted a rest, and we missed the child—and she and Maurice came to us for two nights. Now they are with his people, and will join us next week, and we shall all go together to Bourgogne next month. Just now we only come into Paris for a day now and then. But why did you not write, Christine, to tell us of this poor darling's illness? It was not treating us like true friends, my child.'

Lady Christina glanced at her daughter.

'I thought of writing,' she said, 'but so much has happened I have been so busy and so terribly engrossed. Then Aveline's illness seemed to put everything wrong.'

'Naturally,' said the old lady. 'But, still, things might be worse. The child is getting better. It is not like you to lose heart, Christine.'

For all answer Lady Christina threw her arms round her old friend's neck and burst into tears.

'No,' she said, 'I don't think things could be much worse.'

Aveline was terribly startled. She had never before seen her mother cry—'not like that, at least,' she told Leo afterwards; and the tears of a hard, practical, unemotional nature, when they do come, are painful to see.

'Mamma,' she said, 'dear mamma,' and she tried to get up and cross the room. But the words were faint, and the effort to speak seemed to choke her. In another moment she had fallen back on the sofa unconscious.

It was not a very bad faint, it was but the natural result of the agitation in the girl's weakened state. But it frightened Lady Christina thoroughly. Never since her childhood had Aveline known her mother so genuinely anxious and tender.

'It is like when I was little and had the measles, mamma dear,' she whispered, when she was, comparatively speaking, well again and able to be left in Leo's charge, while her mother went off with Madame de Boncœur for the good talk on which the old lady insisted.

'She is very weak, the poor child,' said she, shaking her head sagely, when she found herself alone with Christina.

'Yes. The doctor says she should have country air. But it is impossible. We shall be returning to London in less than three weeks, and I have so much upon me to see about already. It is quite impossible.'

'I don't know about that,' said the old lady. 'But first—tell me more, my dear Christine. You said much had happened, and I can see it has not been of a pleasant kind. Tell me all. I have known you nearly all your life. I am an old woman, and—I am a rich woman, Christine. Do not have any false pride.'

For she was a very shrewd old woman too. She guessed pretty correctly that no troubles were so likely to overcome Christina so completely as those connected with money.

And Lady Christina told her all—all, that is to say, that she

herself knew. For as to the exact nature of the causes of the rupture of Aveline's engagement, Sir Francis Ayrton and Mr. Verney had determined to be silent.

'There were disgraceful things that came out about the young man. I do not know all the particulars, and of course Aveline will never know. Owen and Sir Francis had an interview, and Aveline had already got frightened by something she had overheard. I don't know exactly how it was. I was forbidden to talk to her about it. She was already ill. But all was given up. It had to be. His poor mother feels it terribly.'

'Yes,' said Madame de Boncœur, 'it is of course much worse for her than for you.'

'That is what she said,' replied Lady Christina, in some surprise. 'Do you think so too? I cannot see it. It is no case of pounds, shillings, and pence to *them*,' she added, with a bitterness which prevented the coarseness of the speech from being too conspicuous. But to the practical, matter-of-fact old Frenchwoman it would not in any case, perhaps, have appeared in that light.

'No,' she agreed, 'that is true. And such cases are very serious; but still, Christine, they are not the worst. But tell me all, my dear. Is it anything new about your sons?'

It was a great relief to Lady Christina to be able to unbosom herself of all her troubles to so kind and sympathising a listener. Madame de Boncœur remained more than an hour closeted with her, and when the old lady left, it was with the kindliest '*au revoir* then, till to-morrow, when I will call for Aveline.'

And Lady Christina's face looked ten years younger when she rejoined her daughters.

'She is the best and kindest woman in the world,' she exclaimed with, for her, rare effusiveness. 'Aveline, you are sure to get well now. Madame de Boncœur is coming to fetch you to-morrow to take you out to the country for ten days or so. And you will see Modeste; she and her husband are to be at Château Villers next week—you will like that?'

'Yes, indeed, mamma,' Aveline replied, while a faint colour rose to her pale cheeks, 'there could be nothing I should like so much. And I shall get quite strong, you will see, and come back able to help you with all you will have to do when the time comes for going home. Mamma, dear,' she went on, with a touching appeal in her voice, 'you have been so kind to me—you will let me be a very useful daughter to you now? It is all I can do.'

'You must get strong first of all,' said Lady Christina. Her tone was a little hard; but Aveline did not mind; it was a good deal not to be answered, as she often had been, with chilling contempt.

'Aveline,' said her mother, when Leonora had left the room. 'I have not told you all that that good kind friend has done. She has given me a cheque for ten thousand francs—four hundred pounds, Aveline. She insisted on it; she wanted even to make it more; she made me tell her all our anxieties. This will tide over the present difficulties, and if only Chris gets through, the worst will surely be over.'

'Oh, mamma, how good of her!' exclaimed Aveline.

'She is my oldest friend in the world, it is true. That takes away the feeling of obligation,' said Lady Christina.

But Aveline thought to herself that not many 'oldest friends in the world' would be capable of such thoughtful generosity.

The next day saw Aveline safely installed at the Château de Villers under the kind care of Madame de Boncœur and her daughter.

And that same day Sir Francis and Lady Ayrton left Paris for London. Their son was to have accompanied them, but an hour or two before they were to leave, a letter was brought to Sir Francis by a special messenger.

'What's this?' he said impatiently. 'Some bill, I suppose. You told me you were certain everything was settled?' he went on, turning to the courier.

'I am quite sure of it, sir,' he replied. 'It may, perhaps, be something of Mr. Ayrton's,' he added in a lower voice.

'If so, I have nothing to do with it, and it should not be addressed to me,' said Sir Francis, as he proceeded to open it. The writing was not like that of a tradesman—of a French tradesman especially—and the name and title were correctly given in the English way.

Sir Francis's face changed as he read the opening words. It changed still further as he read on. Finally, a grim smile, half cynical, half contemptuous, settled on to his face.

'I suppose it is what one might have expected,' he said; 'I suppose it *might* have been worse—it *might* have been a barmaid or a ballet-girl—and in this case, at least, if it is so one does not know it. But oh, spirits of my ancestors of Ayrton Manor and Garthdean!'

There was no time, however, for indulgence in reflections, cynical or otherwise. Lady Ayrton at that moment entered the room.

'All is ready. I hope you are feeling pretty well, Francis. But I cannot imagine what has become of Wilfred. He went out very early indeed this morning and has not come back. But all his things are packed, Irving says.'

Irving was Mr. Ayrton's own man.

'Ah!' said Sir Francis, and again the grim smile overspread his face. 'Sophia, try to be sensible and not excite yourself; listen quietly, my poor dear.'

It was long since her husband had addressed her so sympathisingly. Lady Ayrton thought something very dreadful must be coming. She grew deadly pale, and clutched at the table to support herself, but she endeavoured to remain calm.

'What—what is it, Francis? What has happened to Wilfred? Has he had an accident? Is he—oh, no, you could not smile in that way if it were so.'

'Read this for yourself. You see it is his own writing,' said Sir Francis.

And, so far reassured, Lady Ayrton read as follows:—

'MY DEAR FATHER,—

'I did my best, as you and my mother know, to marry to please *you*. It isn't my fault that that affair came to grief. I now write to tell you that by the time you get this I shall have married to please myself. The lady is Miss Lucilla Greenflier; my mother will remember having seen her. I shan't trouble you about money matters—she has lots for us both—so I can leave all that to you. There was such a lot of bother about the other affair that I and Lucilla settled to manage all for ourselves. She's the handsomest girl I've seen for a long time, and just the sort to suit me.

'Your affectionate son,

'WILFRED T. AYRTON.

'P.S.—Irving knows what to do with my things.

'Address Hôtel des Etats Unis, Bâle, till further notice. *Bon voyage*, in which Lucilla joins.'

Lady Ayrton's pale lips moved, but no word escaped them.

'Come now, my dear Sophia, don't take on, as the old women say,' said Sir Francis, kindly, but much in the tone he would have used to a child. 'I assure you it might have been worse. You've seen the girl?'

'Yes,' half whispered Lady Ayrton, 'the very worst style of American. A great strapping creature, fearfully over-dressed. Handsome—yes, I suppose so.'

'She'll keep him in order,' said Sir Francis, with a grim chuckle. 'She's a sharp young woman. No doubt she satisfies herself that enough of the property is entailed to secure his position, and beyond that she probably does not care. They *are* rich; I have heard of them. So she has bought herself a title—*and* a precious young scamp as a husband. But I am very much mistaken if Master Wilfred's halcyon days of liberty are not at an end.'

'What shall you do?' asked Lady Ayrton.

'Do? Just what we were going to do—cross to-day, and when we get to town send for Daunt'—his lawyer—'and talk it over with him. He must satisfy himself that the marriage is perfectly regular, probably interview the lady or her guardians, if she has any, and find out what she has, if she chooses to tell. Then I must give him a fitting allowance, and——'

'Not Garthdean,' interrupted his wife; 'somehow it would seem to me unendurable—that American parvenue installed at Garthdean.'

'I agree with you,' said Sir Francis; 'no, they shall not have Garthdean, nor any of the landed property that is not entailed. I must consider things over. There are my cousin Lionel's boys—very decent fellows, I believe. And as to ourselves, Sophia, for the short time it will probably be, we shall be more at peace, I trust. I shall try to be more patient.'

Lady Ayrton's tears were dropping by now.

'Don't speak of a short time, Francis. Remember—you are all I have now.'

CHAPTER XII.

THE summer had come and gone. It had been a hot one, even in England, but by the end of September stormy weather set in suddenly. A traveller arriving at Boulogne very early one morning from the south was met, to his annoyance, by the announcement that the tidal packet was not crossing.

'What a nuisance!' he exclaimed in French. 'I must go on to Calais, I suppose, by the next train,' for he had got out of the railway carriage before hearing the news, and the train was already moving out of the station.

'Monsieur will have plenty of time to rest himself and eat at the hotel close to the station,' said insinuatingly an employé

from that same hotel, hanging about the station on the look-out for waifs and strays stranded there by the unusual state of things. 'Monsieur will find it very comfortable. We have already several rooms occupied by travellers. A poor English milord is very ill; the rough crossing yesterday knocked him up. They were obliged to remain, he, and madame, and the servants. He is very ill, I fear. I was sent for the doctor at midnight.'

The two, the Englishman and the hotel emissary, were by this time in the street, the latter carrying the stranger's rugs and dressing-bag. The gentleman was tired and sleepy; he had come straight through from Madrid, and the chatter of his companion passed by almost unheeded. Suddenly a word caught his attention.

'Sir Ayrton,' the man was saying. 'He is perhaps a friend of Monsieur's, being a compatriot.'

'Sir——, what name did you say? You don't think all Englishmen are friends, do you? But what name did you say?'

'Ayrton,' repeated the man, giving it the French pronunciation. 'Sir Ayrton, I can spell it for monsieur,' which he proceeded to do.

He had seen by the style of travelling of the invalid and his wife that they were people of wealth, and their sudden arrival at the hotel, and the excitement of the whole affair, had made considerable sensation. He was in a frame of mind very open to 'pour-boires,' and delighted to have at last attracted the newcomer's attention.

A respectable, staid-looking personage, bearing courier in every feature of his face and line of his figure, was crossing the entrance of the hotel as they went in.

'And the poor gentleman, how is he? Anything more that I can fetch for him?' inquired the commissionnaire, or whatever he was, obtrusively.

The courier stopped short and looked at him.

'The doctor will be coming again directly,' he said, 'just wait about till he does. I want him to advise madame to send for a *garde-malade*. There are such to be got here, I suppose?'

'Oh yes, doubtless. The sisters are in the next street,' replied the man.

The stranger in his turn accosted the courier.

'I fancy I have seen you before,' he said. 'Are you—were you in attendance on Sir Francis Ayrton last spring in Paris?'

The poor courier's face, which had been clouded with anxiety, brightened up.

'Ah, yes, sir, I am with him six months of every year. But we have never had such a catastrophe before. He *would* cross yesterday, though my lady and I begged him not, and he has nearly, if not quite, killed himself. And here we are, quite alone, and my lady so upset, and the maid no use. May I ask your name, sir? It would be a great comfort to my lady to meet with a friend. I, too, remember your face, I think, sir.'

The gentleman began rummaging in his coat-pocket—he drew out a card.

'Here,' he said, 'take this to Lady Ayrton, with my compliments. If she would like to see me, I am quite at her service.'

Luigi hastened upstairs; he was too well-bred to study the card in its owner's presence, but he had no sooner reached the landing than he set himself to do so.

'Mr. Nigel Hereward!' he exclaimed. 'Ah! to be sure; I have it now. "Secrétaire à l'Ambassade de S. M. Britannique." To be sure. He was then at Paris—now, it appears, at Madrid. What a piece of good fortune.—Ah, my lady,' he continued, as he opened the door of a sitting-room, 'good news,' and his thin, dark, kindly face gleamed.

'Has the doctor been again? Does he think him better?' exclaimed Lady Ayrton, starting up from the sofa, where she had been persuaded to take a little rest.

'No, no, my lady. Sir Francis is sleeping quietly. The doctor has not returned. It is that I have met a friend of your ladyship's—a gentleman now in the hotel; he sends this, and would be enchanted to be of any service.'

With which rather flowery translation of Mr. Hereward's simple message, he held out the card.

Lady Ayrton took it eagerly.

'Nigel Hereward,' she exclaimed. 'Oh, I am indeed very thankful. Beg him to come up at once, if he will, Luigi.'

The courier had disappeared almost before she had finished the sentence. Two minutes more brought a knock at the door, followed by a 'May I come in?' in a remembered voice.

The poor lady hurried forward, both hands outstretched.

'Oh, Mr. Hereward,' she cried. 'You don't know how thankful I am to see the face of a friend. I am in such trouble; has Luigi told you? I—I don't know what to think of Sir Francis, or what the doctor really thinks,' and her voice broke down, as if the tears she had evidently been shedding were not far off. 'I am afraid he is very ill, he is so very—so patient, and

gentle, and subdued. I would give anything to hear him scolding a little,' she added with a wintry smile.

Nigel's sympathy was at once aroused.

'I am so sorry for you,' he replied cordially. 'It was the bad crossing, your courier told me.'

'Yes; Sir Francis never will consent to give up, once we have started, and he could not believe it would be so bad. And he was almost knocked over, and dreadfully shaken. He fainted on the boat—we thought we should never get him here. And the doctor won't tell me exactly what he thinks.'

'And you are alone? Will you not telegraph to—to your son? Can I do that for you?' he asked.

'To tell you the truth, I am by no means sure where they are. They are terrible gad-abouts,' she said, with another little attempt at a smile. 'And I should not care to send for Wilfred unless his father expressed a wish for him. You see, we do not know his wife, and I am certain Sir Francis could not endure to have her here. And if he came, she would come too. She never leaves him—I must say she seems to be a good wife. But—it would never do for her to come.'

Mr. Hereward felt and looked completely bewildered.

'You do not know Mrs. Ayrton,' he said, 'not know Av—— Miss Verney?'

Lady Ayrton grew crimson.

'Did you not know?' she said. 'Have you not heard of our sad disappointment? That *was* to have been, but it fell through. My son married an American. And to you, an old friend like you, Mr. Hereward, I may say for once what I feel is due to her—to that sweet girl. My son was not good enough for her. But it was to us a most sad disappointment.'

Mr. Hereward bowed as gravely as if the fact of Wilfred Ayrton's 'not being good enough for her' were an entirely new suggestion. And no one would have suspected from the perfect calm of his outward demeanour the rush of joy that had filled his heart at Lady Ayrton's explanation.

'It is not that *I* am any the more likely to win her,' he reflected. 'But, at least, there is not that awful feeling of desecration, as it were, connected with her now. The thought of her marrying that fellow was too unendurable. And after all——' his thoughts ran on in a kind of recklessness, the result of the reaction from the under-lock-and-key condition in which all these months he had held them. 'After all, we are neither of us old

yet—"while there is youth," at least, "there is hope." Who knows what may happen?

> Perhaps some night,
> When new things happen, a meteor-ball
> May slip through the sky.

Who knows? At least, I can think of her again now; and how little this morning did I imagine *that* would be the case before night?'

And all this time poor Lady Ayrton was meandering plaintively on with the stories of her woes, firmly believing that Mr. Hereward was giving her his full attention. Her voice stopping at last brought him to himself with a shock. But before he had time to risk her discovery of his abstraction by a random answer, a tap at the door made them look round. It was Luigi again.

'My master, Sir Francis, is awake. I told him of Monsieur—Mr. Hereward being here. He begs to see you, sir, at once.'

'Oh, Luigi,' said Lady Ayrton, tremulously, 'do you think you have done right? Has it not excited him terribly?'

'Not at all, not at all, my lady,' Luigi exclaimed eagerly. His eyes were gleaming and his face brimful of satisfaction. 'You will see, it will do him more good than anything. If Monsieur will accompany me——'

'As I am?' said Nigel. 'I've been travelling all night and I've been smoking. I'm not very fit for an invalid's room.'

'It will not matter, he is so impatient,' urged Luigi.

So Nigel gave in and followed the courier down the long passage.

'Sir Francis's own man had preceded us to Cannes to get all in order there,' Luigi went on. 'We have always done thus when we made the journey through, staying but one night in Paris, and never before has there been a *contretemps*.'

He opened a door, and Nigel entered the darkened room. At first he could scarcely distinguish Sir Francis's features—his face was as white as the pillows on which his grey, almost white, hair made but a faint shadow.

'I am grieved,' began Mr. Hereward, gently lifting the thin hand feebly held out.

'I am so delighted to see you,' interrupted Sir Francis, cheerily, 'I cannot think of anything else. Tell me, Hereward, are you *very* pressed for time? Where are you bound for? Can you delay your journey a few hours?'

Nigel reflected—he was too considerate to make any rash promise on the spur of the moment's feeling.

'I think I can,' he said. 'I am going home on a few weeks' leave; but a day or two more or less is not of vital importance. There is a marriage—my sister-in-law's sister's—they wanted me to be at, but I don't think it would much matter. Home, in the strict sense of the word, you know, I have none.'

'You are very good,' said Sir Francis. His voice sounded even feebler than in the first flush of eager greeting. 'I will tell you what I want of you. The doctor here is a fool—not professionally, perhaps—indeed, I fancy he is sharp and clever. But he will not tell me the truth about myself. I want you to see him and get it out of him. As far as I can judge by former attacks, though I have never had so bad a one as this, it is a question of the next few hours. If the worst symptoms lessen within that time there is a chance of my pulling through till the next attack (I shall not live through *another*, of that I feel sure), and I should like you to stay till this is decided, so that she, my poor wife, may not be utterly alone. But, above all, if there is this chance, don't, for Heaven's sake! telegraph for any one yet. Let that be at the *very* last—you understand?' his voice was growing almost inaudible.

Nigel bowed his head.

'I will go and see the doctor at once,' he said. 'In the meantime, try to keep quiet—you will do so, will you not, dear sir?'

Sir Francis smiled faintly.

'It will be easier now,' he said. 'I shall do my best. I don't want to die here—at least let it be in my own house.'

And Mr. Hereward, entering with quick instinct and sympathy into the invalid's feelings, went off at once to the doctor, whom, by good luck, he found at home. When he left the doctor's house it was to go to the telegraph office. But the telegram was to none of the Ayrton belongings. It was to his own brother, and to the effect that he might be detained some days at Boulogne, and expressing his regret at not being able to be present at the marriage.

Then he returned to the hotel and made his way cautiously upstairs. A very slight tap at the door brought Luigi, eager and alert as ever.

'Not asleep?' whispered Nigel.

'No, no—anxious to see you,' said the courier, opening the door. Mr. Hereward entered and approached the bed.

'Sir Francis,' he said at once and without preamble, 'I have seen the doctor. It is as you thought. You have a good chance of pulling through if the next few hours bring no aggravation of the bad symptoms.'

'That is better than I thought,' said Sir Francis.

'It is the truth, exactly. But even if all goes well, you must keep yourself absolutely quiet, free from *all* agitation for some days to come. And that you may feel more at rest—you kindly said my being here was a satisfaction—I have telegraphed home to Roderick that I shall be detained here some days—in fact,' he added, with a smile, 'as long as you want me.'

A mist came over the eyes of the sick man.

'Hereward, you are very good—I cannot thank you enough. And it is not the first time. You did your best for that graceless boy at school. I am heavily in your debt.'

'Don't put it that way,' said Nigel; 'it is a pleasure. Let me see you do all you can to get well by keeping quiet.'

'I will, I will,' Sir Francis replied.

'Good God,' he murmured to himself as Nigel left the room, 'why could I not have had a son like that?'

And not till he had seen Lady Ayrton, and, after explaining to her the real state of things, had persuaded her to go to bed and try to sleep for some hours, promising that she might then sit up all night with Sir Francis if she liked, did Mr. Hereward remember that he was both hungry and tired himself.

The next few days passed like a curious dream to Nigel. Here he was installed almost in the place of a son to the parents of the man whom less than a week ago he had at once envied and hated with an intensity which it now appalled him to realise—nay, he had been near to hating Sir Francis and his wife themselves. He had tried and longed to hate Aveline, and imagined that he had succeeded in despising her. And now any pretext even for that mitigated form of hatred was taken from him.

For Sir Francis, once his convalescence was established, had made good use of his time. He had confided to Nigel much, though not all, of what had passed in Paris after the young man had left, and in so doing he had made himself master of a secret he had long been curious to know.

'Yes,' he said one day, 'she is one of the best and sweetest girls possible. Where she erred it was from good though mistaken motives, and——'

'Her father is a man I have the greatest respect for,' interupted Nigel. He could not bear to hear Aveline's conduct

discussed, even by Sir Francis. 'It is only a pity he lets the reins slip so much out of his own hands.'

Sir Francis smiled urbanely.

'But with a Lady Christina for a wife, my dear fellow—' he said deprecatingly. 'Shall you see them when you go over?' he inquired.

Mr. Hereward shook his head.

'I hardly think so,' he replied. 'One is never sure of seeing any one at this time of year, and I shall scarcely stay in town at all. Besides, my leave is very short. My brother wanted to see me about business matters of his own, otherwise I should have preferred to wait till later and get a longer holiday.'

'And short as your time was I have made it still shorter,' said Sir Francis, regretfully.

'Pray don't speak of it so,' said the young man. 'I am so very pleased, so thankful to have been of use—as you *will* say I have been,' he added with a smile.

'It is not only I that say so; ask Luigi, ask the doctor. I began to turn the corner from the moment I knew there was some one reliable at hand. That first night was horrible,' he went on, with a shudder, 'when I came to myself and found where I was, and imagined myself dying here, and Wilfred and that American swooping down upon us and having things all their own way, and poor Sophia quite helpless and alone. No, if I get through this winter, and get home again for another summer, I shall be more than thankful, and I shall never leave home again.'

But his 'getting through the winter' and seeing home again seemed a very doubtful prospect in the eyes of Mr. Hereward the morning he at last saw his friends off to Paris, and he was somewhat surprised at every one else not sharing his misgivings.

'You really think he will live to get to Cannes,' Mr. Hereward asked anxiously when the train had moved out of the station and he turned to say good-bye to the doctor, who had accompanied him to see them off.

'Oh yes, oh dear yes,' he replied. 'He may go on pretty comfortably until another attack—and that, as he seems to feel himself, will be the last. But that may not be for long—a year, two years, who knows? It is you who have done the most to get him round this time,' he added politely.

So, for more reasons than one, Mr. Hereward did not regret the storm which had weather-bound him that September day at Boulogne.

CHAPTER XIII.

SEPTEMBER again, but early September, and a very different scene from the storm-tossed Boulogne coast a year ago. It is as sunny and warm as midsummer; such things as wind and tempest must surely be altogether unknown in this sheltered corner of old France, where one could picture the peaceful lives of the inhabitants droning on one century after another with little change or excitement.

'I do love this terrace so much. It must be warm and sheltered even in winter,' said the taller of two girls who were sauntering up and down a wide gravelled walk running along one side of an old château. There were broad shallow steps both upwards and downwards from the terrace, and great green-painted boxes containing orange-trees at regular intervals, and down below, here and there among the trees, which made a sort of miniature forest on this side of the house, garden seats and tiny summer-houses were dotted about temptingly.

Her companion shook her head.

'Ah, as for that I should be sorry to answer. The winter is not long here, but it comes sharply and suddenly. Of late years we have never risked meeting it here, for grandmamma could not stand cold now.'

'It is nearly a month since I came,' said the first speaker again. 'It does not seem nearly so long to me. You don't know how I have looked forward to coming, Modeste. And I have enjoyed it *so* much.'

'Not more than we have enjoyed having you. Maurice says you must certainly come to us every year—it is one of the nice things in England that girls can pay visits to their friends in this way—at least till you are married.'

'Then you may look forward to having a long series of visits from me,' said Aveline, laughing. 'I shall never marry, Modeste. I am twenty-three now, and I think I can tell.'

Young Madame de Bois-Hubert looked sorry.

'I hope you will,' she said. 'It is so sad not to be married—at least so we think. In England it is not thought quite the same.'

'It would appear so, certainly,' said Aveline. 'So many women are never married. But they don't all look as if it was

because they had never cared to marry,' she went on with a little laugh. 'It seems badly managed somehow—I *feel* as if I should manage better if I were a mother with daughters; but perhaps I should be just as puzzled as other people. I am almost like a mother as it is—with Leo. I do so hope that nothing will ever make her unhappy.'

'There is no fear,' said Modeste, with a little hesitation, 'of your mother wishing her to marry any one she does not care for.'

'Leo would not do it. She has more decision of character than I have. And besides—no, I think poor mamma has left off making plans. It makes me sorry to think that I shall probably always be a disappointment to her. We must hope things will go better with Leonora.'

'But you said, dear Aveline, that you had not been unhappy all this time—that you felt you were helping your father and mother?'

'Yes,' said Miss Verney, 'I think so—I hope so. Things have been better. But I was glad to come away from home for a little. Poor mamma was rather upset lately when Sir Francis Ayrton died, and people began talking of the splendid fortune his son had come into, and how handsome the new Lady Ayrton is, and all that kind of talk.'

'Horrible people,' said Modeste. 'You don't mean she—your mother—wishes you had married him?'

'I don't know really,' said Aveline. '*I* don't, and that is of more consequence. No—twenty times over better be an old maid than marry a man like that. But he hasn't turned out so badly since his marriage; his wife keeps him in very good order, they say. I am very glad of it, for poor Lady Ayrton's sake.'

'He would have killed *you*,' said Madame de Bois-Hubert. 'You could not have managed him.'

'No,' said Aveline, 'I don't think I could. I have not much strength of character, Modeste. I fear I have given several people reason to despise me; that is the sorest feeling I ever have,' she added, with a look in her eyes that her friend could not bear to see.

'Aveline, you are never to say that. It is not so. No one who knows you could dream of despising you. You are morbid on that point,' said Modeste, earnestly.

'Well, we won't discuss it,' said Aveline, lightly. 'You—all of you—are too good to me. No one ever cheers me as you do, and I owe you more than I can tell.'

They had wandered down among the trees by now, and had seated themselves on one of the benches. The sweet soft air came fluttering gently through the branches; the indescribable pathos of the autumn was already beginning to be perceptible.

'I suppose,' said Miss Verney, 'glancing upwards at the old house, 'this place has changed very little for—how long? A century or two at least?'

'It was partly destroyed in the Revolution,' said Modeste; 'but it was restored exactly as it had been. So I suppose it looks the same. But strange scenes must have passed here, nevertheless.'

'And old people have died, and young ones grown into their places; happy brides like you, Modeste, have come here, and little babies have been born, and men and women have been joyful and sorrowful—and the birds go on singing, and the wind whispers through the trees just the same—just the same. Isn't everything strange in this world?' said Aveline, dreamily.

Modeste smiled indulgently. Her friend's fancies made her smile a little sometimes.

'I don't know,' she said. 'Things are as they were meant to be, I suppose. The world is a very nice place, I think. Only I do feel sometimes almost ashamed to be so happy, for I don't deserve it, and so many others better than I are not so.'

'Dear little Modeste,' said Aveline, 'you do deserve prosperity, for it never makes you selfish.'

At that moment a step was heard coming along the gravel. It was Modeste's husband.

'What are you two young ladies so busy talking about?' he said. 'Have you not yet completed all the confidences accumulated since you were last together?'

His tone was light and rallying. But his wife knew him so well that she detected traces of something unusual, something to be told, beneath his trifling words. She glanced up inquiringly, but so that Aveline could not perceive the question in her eyes. Monsieur de Bois-Hubert nodded his head slightly.

'Yes—another letter,' he whispered, so low that but for the motion of his lips Modeste could scarcely have understood the words.

'The letters have just come—none for you, mademoiselle,' he said, addressing Aveline. 'But Madame de Boncœur is quite in a flutter. An old friend is to arrive here to-day, on his way from London to somewhere or other—Madrid, I think. A compatriot of yours, mademoiselle?'

'An Englishman!' exclaimed Aveline—the word Madrid had already caught her attention.

'Exactly. And, by-the-by, an old acquaintance of yours too, Monsieur Hereward. You knew him, of course, when your family was in Paris?'

'Yes,' said Aveline, calmly, but very gravely—'If only I had known it before, even yesterday,' she said to herself, 'I would have managed to go. But as it is, I must stay and bear it. It would be undignified to do otherwise. But it is very hard. I had so hoped never to see him again. Oh, I do trust they suspect nothing.'

'Monsieur Hereward,' said Modeste. 'Ah, bonne maman will be very pleased and quite excited. He has always promised to pay us a visit some day, *en passant*, but till now he has never been able to do so, though he dined with us last winter in Paris one day.'

'I did not know you had ever seen him since—since that time in Paris,' said Aveline.

She was very pale by this time; her lips even were white. But she was unconscious of this, and the young husband and wife were far too wise to seem to notice it.

'Oh, yes,' said Modeste, lightly, 'we have never lost sight of him. He is a very steady friend. He was always so pleased to hear of you from us. Oh, dear me, it is getting chilly. Let us go in, Aveline. I do hope *déjeûner* is nearly ready.'

Aveline rose, and Modeste drew her friend's arm within her own.

'Does—will not Mr. Hereward be surprised to see me here?' said Aveline.

'Oh, no, bonne maman has very likely told him you were here. She writes to him often. You must arrange a shooting party for him, Maurice,' she went on, 'if he stays over to-morrow.'

Madame de Boncœur met them on the *perron*. She was in high spirits, but addressed herself chiefly to her granddaughter.

'Modeste,' she said; 'there are some letters I want you to help me to write before the postman calls. I don't want to be busy when Monsieur Hereward arrives. Aveline, my dear, you will excuse us for an hour or two?'

'Of course, dear madame,' said Aveline, only too glad to be alone. 'I am always happy in the garden. And to-day is so lovely.'

She quickly made a little plan in her head of how she would stay out till late, and manage to avoid meeting the expected guest till they were all together assembled in the drawing-room before dinner.

'It will not be so difficult after the first meeting,' she thought.

And *déjeûner* over, Aveline strolled off further than the garden. She made her way into the woods, penetrating as far as she dared without risk of losing her way.

'I should not like a hue and cry after me. That would be anything but desirable,' she said to herself with a smile.

The woods were very charming this afternoon. Aveline found a pleasant seat on some felled trees, and there she established herself, nominally to read, in reality to think. But in spite of herself her thoughts were less consequent than usual. The prospect of seeing Nigel again had brought with it a certain excitement, notwithstanding the painful shrinking with which she anticipated it. She was so young still, and life might have been so fair—so very fair for her!

'But I had begun to think of it as all in the far past,' she thought. 'It is hard to have the old pain forced upon me—the dreadful feeling of mortification above all.'

A little bird fluttered down from a branch hard by. It was so tame, for these woods were seldom visited, that it hopped up fearlessly close to Aveline, and seemed to glance at her sympathisingly with its bright, sparkling eyes. All animals loved the girl, she was so gentle and quiet. She smiled at the little creature, and watched it with interest.

'Hush!' she whispered involuntarily, as a step, crunching the already fallen leaves, sounded near, 'hush!'—'They will frighten the poor little bird,' she added to herself under her breath, and she glanced up, expecting to see some woodman or peasant-boy trudging homewards in his sabots.

But a sudden cry escaped her; she started up, and stood as if turned to stone when the intruder met her view. It was Nigel Hereward!

'Mr. Hereward!' she exclaimed.

'Oh, Miss Verney,' he said, 'I have had such a hunt to find you. They told me you were sure to be somewhere in the grounds near the house—that you never went further.' He paused, seemingly quite out of breath.

'And they have been uneasy about me,' she said. 'I am so

sorry. It was thoughtless of me. I will go back at once,' and she was hastening off when Mr. Hereward arrested her by his words.

'Miss Verney,' he said rather ruefully, 'I wish you would give your pity to those who deserve it. Mesdames, our amiable châtelaines, are not in the least uneasy about you. But I—am very much out of breath. Will you not allow me five minutes' grace to recover myself?' and he seemed as if he would seat himself on the tree she had just quitted, and looked up at her half anxiously, half comically.

'Five hours, if you like,' said Aveline, with a slight and rather forced laugh, 'only I must go in. It is later than I thought.'

'What a story!' said the young man to himself. 'She wants to escape from a *tête-à-tête*, that is the truth. What if I am wrong after all! what if that child was wrong!'

And the rueful predominated over the comical as he rose slowly again.

'I cannot let you go home alone, seeing that I came on purpose to find you,' he said seriously.

Aveline flushed crimson.

'I am so sorry. I never thought of it,' she said penitently. 'I have never even thanked you for coming to fetch me. Just as you arrived! But I do think Madame de Boncœur or Modeste might have sent one of the servants.'

'Yes,' said Nigel, curtly, 'I think so too, if they had sent any one. But they did not. I came of my own accord. And you have not only not thanked me, you have not even shaken hands with me. And it is sixteen months and a fortnight, and as nearly as possible twenty-two hours since we met. The last time I saw you was one afternoon the April before last, at the Ayrtons' hotel, when I told you I was going away.'

He looked at her as he spoke. He was leaning against a tree.

'Won't you sit down again for two minutes?' he said. 'You might do as much as that for me, surely.'

Aveline sat down. She was very pale now.

'Aveline,' he began, speaking quietly, with the quiet that comes of extreme self-restraint, 'you are too good to play with me or to fence with me. If I spoke for an hour it would be no use, I know, if—if you feel it can't be. But I have come here on purpose—if you reject me I shall go away this afternoon. Do you think, *do* you think you can care for me enough to marry me dear?'

Aveline raised her face. It was bathed in tears.

'Are you in earnest? Is it not out of pity?' she said. 'I thought you despised me.'

'Who told you so?' he said almost fiercely.

'Mamma,' replied Aveline, impulsively. 'She said I had shown you I cared for you, and that you pitied me, and thought me—oh, I can't say it clearly, but you can understand. She said I was a fool, and that you had seen too many girls to think seriously of things like that. She said I should have known you were not thinking of marrying, and——'

'Then you did care for me,' he interrupted, forgetting all the rest. 'And do you still? Can you forgive me if I made you suffer? I did not mean it. I thought I could bear it *myself*, and that you would not care. I thought your mother would never have thrown us together so much had she not been sure you were in no danger of caring.'

'And what has made you think otherwise now?' she said, smiling a little, a very little, through her tears.

He smiled too.

'Never mind that just now,' he said. He was kneeling beside her now, so that he could see the sweet blue eyes which no longer evaded his gaze. 'Say it, dear, say that you care for me. I don't mind if it is not as much as I care for you. It could not be.'

'I don't need to say it,' she whispered. 'And that isn't true, it *is* as much. It must be, for I could not care for you more than I do, Nigel.'

The soft autumn breezes fluttered and murmured through the trees, a faint rustling among the dry leaves made Aveline look up. The little bird was there again. She touched Nigel gently.

'He has come to wish us good luck,' she said softly.

And in a little while Nigel explained it all to her.

'Your mother was right so far,' he said. 'I could not dream of marrying. I was too poor. But beyond that, how dared—— No, she is your mother, and we are going to be so happy we can forgive it all. It is only within the last week or two that things have changed. I have been to England to see about it all. Sir Francis Ayrton has left me a legacy, which insures comfort if not luxury to us.'

'Oh,' said Aveline, clasping her hands, 'how good of him! Do you think it was partly——' then she stopped and grew crimson again.

'Yes, dear. I think it was partly, greatly for you, though he worded it so as to seem natural. He was good enough to say I had been of service to him. He did not think he would have lived so long—he had been lingering on month after month, not realising how time was going. Had he done so he would have told me, though I don't know that I could have agreed to it, while he lived,' he added. 'I got to know him very well that time at Boulogne,' he went on.

'I heard of that,' said Aveline. 'But—you knew about what I did—what I consented to after I thought that you despised me——'

Nigel placed his finger on her lips. 'Hush, don't say such things,' he said. But she persisted. 'Yes, I must. It was that that made me do it. I thought I was no good, no use in the world. I hated myself. I thought I would try to make them all happier.'

'It was not your fault,' he said hastily.

'Yes, it was,' she repeated sturdily. 'I know it was wrong; my best friends, Modeste and Leo, they helped to show it to me'

'And you undid it—bravely. I know that,' he said; 'Sir Francis told me.'

'And was it by him that you began to think—that I—that I did care?'

'Partly—not altogether. I will tell you now. She does not know herself how much she told me. It was Leo, good little Leo. I called at your house last week, just to find out where you were. Your mother was out. I saw Leo.'

Aveline's eyes sparkled.

'Nigel,' she said, 'that is one thing we may be able to do—to take care of Leo, and prevent her suffering as I have done.'

'My darling!' he exclaimed.

'And what will mamma say?' added Aveline afterwards, when they were making their way home through the woods.

'She will grin and bear it, I suppose,' said Nigel, calmly.

'Better, perhaps, to have me married to a—I suppose you will never be a *rich* man?—than not at all, she will think,' said Aveline, laughing.

What every one else said—Leonora, Mr. Verney, Madame de Boncœur and 'her children,' as she called her little family group in the kindly French way—there will be no difficulty in imagining.

THE END.

At the Sign of the Ship.

THERE seems reason to fear that a Virgin will presently be sacrificed by a company of infuriated novelists, as Jodelle and his friends, when a play was accepted, offered a goat to Dionysus. For some reason the novelists are very self-conscious at this moment, and keep inquiring into the health, and feeling the pulse of the Muse of Romance, with an interest shared by the general public. Mr. Rider Haggard has been deciding, in the *Contemporary Review*, that fiction is in a bad way, and he speaks of some American writers and of M. Zola in a style which is almost a *casus belli*. On the other side of the Atlantic, Mr. Boyes, in the *Forum*, also thinks that fiction is in a valetudinarian state. One point on which Mr. Haggard and Mr. Boyes agree is in holding that blushing Maidenhood is the real cause of distress. Mr. Haggard says that novelists are ever in their great task-mistress's eye, and that *her* name is the Young Person. Mr. Boyes also declares that the American Young Girl is the 'Iron Madonna' of fiction, and crushes romancers in her ruthless embrace. Both evidently mean that novelists would work better, and with more freedom, if the standard of popularity were not set by girls, and by notions of what girls may read. Thus, that once bewitching syren, the fair (or dark) maiden of eighteen, the heroine of so many thousand tales, is becoming a kind of Medusa, who petrifies her intrepid chronicler, the novelist. Therefore it is that the Police should keep their eyes on novelists, who, if not carefully watched, are likely enough to immolate a maiden victim to the Muse.

* * *

I confess I don't see what novelists have to complain of. I only wish young girls would read *my* works—my little *excursus* on the *Evolution of Ritual*, or my favourite study, *The Modification of Cannibalism by Cookery*. But the Young Girl

neglects these edifying essays, and they 'wilt' on the dusty shelves. To be read by Young Girls should be an author's joy. M. Renan will admit this; M. Renan, who (though elderly) sighs to be a prayer-book, or other work of devotion, in a well-gloved hand. Let us hope that in *Le Paradis des Gens de Lettres* (which Charles Asselineau beheld in a vision) M. Renan may have this good fortune, and may become an illuminated missal turned over by fair fingers in church, and bound in mosaic of morocco. This is the very fate which these ungallant romancers are protesting against. I once bought an old coloured print at Oxford, in which a young girl of great beauty was represented at her mirror, while an old Duenna produced a romance from under the maiden's pillow, and scolded furiously. Were it not a happy thing to supply the literature thus 'dreamed upon'—like bride-cake—by the fair? Yet novelists rise up against it, as if Tannhäuser had wearied of the sweet captivity in the Hill of Hörsel; or if Merlin had been bored within the four walls of the hollow tower, where lovely Vivien visited him. Fielding was flattered, I am sure, by the preference of Lydia Languish, nor did the fear of offending Miss Languish—a young girl—at all check him in the delineation of Thomas Jones.

* * *

Novelists protest in vain. Their principal public, the chief of their admirers, will always be young girls. Mr. Haggard, to be sure, also conciliated boys: *virginibus puerisque cantat.* There was a time, about 1630, when 'young sparkish girls' were the chief public of William Shakspear, who is described, by a Puritan of that time, as 'creeping into the women's wardrobes.' If the novelist really feels trammelled by the youth of his admirers, he must either induce men to read something out of newspapers, or he must boldly take his chance, and say his say, and be the martyr of the circulating libraries. Ladies appear to have this courage, and I have seen, of late, much written by ladies for ladies, in which the feelings of the Young Person were no kind of check on a large treatment of human nature. The truth is that novelists are too modest. We have a very good set of romancers in England at this hour, and they represent well every form of fiction, from Mr. Meredith's epigram and observation to Mr. Besant's fairy tales of the East End and Mr. Stevenson's stories of undiscovered isles, and of the Highlands before they were discovered, by Sir Walter Scott. Then there is Mrs.

Oliphant with her astonishing vision of a country which, let us hope, none of us may discover for ourselves—the dark dominion where Hope is left behind, and the sound of the Divine Name is a torment.

* * *

THE RESTORATION OF ROMANCE.

(To H. R. H. and R. L. S.)

King Romance was wounded deep,
  All his knights were dead and gone,
All his Court was fallen on sleep,
  In a vale of Avalon!
Nay, men said, *he will not come,*
  Any night or any morn.
Nay, his puissant voice is dumb,
  Silent his enchanted horn!

King Romance was forfeited,
  Banished from his Royal home,
With a price upon his head,
  Driven with sylvan folk to roam.
King Romance is fallen, banned,
  Cried his foe-men overbold,
Broken is the wizard wand,
  All the stories have been told!

Then YOU came from South and North,
  From Tugela, from the Tweed,
Blazoned his achievements forth,
  King Romance is come indeed!
All his foes are overthrown,
  All their wares cast out in scorn,
King Romance hath won his own,
  And the lands where he was born!

Now he sways with wand of gold
  Realms that honoured him of yore.
Hills Dalgetty roamed of old,
  Valleys of enchanted Kôr:
Waves his sceptre o'er the isles,
  Claims the pirates' treasuries,
Rules innumerable miles
  Of the siren-haunted seas!

Elfin folk of coast and cave,
  Laud him in the woven dance,
All the tribes of wold and wave
  Bow the knee to King Romance!
Wand'ring voices Chaucer knew
  On the mountain and the main,
Cry the haunted forest through,
  King Romance has come again!

* * *

There are persons who love not that publishing custom of inserting advertisements of books between the covers of a new volume. 'Tis true this budget doth a little unseemly swell the proportions of a maiden tome, yet I would not be prompt to censure a custom somewhat laudable, if any will but reflect on it. For a book should not be published, as it is not written, for mere present delight, and the convenience of the Reader. It will outlive his brief day, if it have merit, and Fortune be its friend, nor will a later age fail to be instructed by these advertisements which now we upbraid as superfluous. There came of late into my hands (I purchased it, indeed, at a stall in Keswick) the old Translation of Madame de Lafayette's romance, *La Princesse de Clèves.* (A Paris. Chez Claude Barbin, 1678. 4 tom., en 2 vol.) In English the novel hath for name,

THE

PRINCESS

OF

C L E V E S

The Most Famed

ROMANCE

Written in *French* by the greatest Wits of *France.*

Rendered into *English* by a Person of Quality,
At the request of some Friends.

(*à la Sphère*)

LONDON

Printed for *R. Bentley* and *M. Magnes*, in *Russel-Street*,
in *Covent Garden*, 1679

The Translation is from a hand more dexterous than one who now translates, or may I say traduces? the romances of M. Gustave Flaubert, that famed wit of France. But what more takes me than the novel itself is the number of advertisements, wherein we learn how our grandmothers read, and what books the ingenious Mr. Bentley put forth, 'tis now two centuries since.

Mr. Bentley had risked his capital at that season on '*Nostradamus*, his Prophesies,' and 'The Triumphs of God's Revenge against the crying and execrable Sin of wilful and premeditated Murders.' From this title I gather that the author had no such aversion to common manslaughter, as to killing of set purpose. 'Tis, indeed, no inconsiderable distinction in morality, though I had as lief be shot of malice aforethought, for my poor part, as be killed by one in a moment of passion and beyond himself. Mr. Bentley, moreover, did not disdain to publish the dramas of Madam *Beane*: she, I think, can be no other than that applauded Afra, 'who fairly puts all characters to bed.' 'Tartuff; or, the French Puritan,' also engaged Mr. Bentley's types, and many plays of Mr. Lee and 'Mr. Witherly.' The spelling is not mine, Mr. Quarterly Reviewer. I do but copy it from Mr. Bentley's advertisement. Here '*Plato's* Apologie of *Socrates*' rubs shoulders with '*Covent-Garden* Drollery,' and 'the Happy Slave Compleat' neighbours 'The Unfortunate *Hero*.' I hope, egad, the *Hero* was 'compleat,' though 'Unfortunate,' but perchance his very misfortune was no more than this, to resemble 'Aurelia's Unfortunate Young Man.' One comedy put forth by Mr. Bentley I commend to my censurers, 'tis *The Fool turned Critique*; no very astonishing metamorphosis, there will be some to say. '*Calisto*; or, the Chast Nymph. A Masque,' represented a lady that had stranger misfortunes, though *Ovid*, sure, must have some hidden Allegory when he tells us she was altered to the guise of a she-bear! The French books in Mr. Bentley's shop were *roguish*, I fear, as Mr. Pepys liked them. Of such is *Galand Escroke*, and a 'Pleasant Novel,' that will remind such as know it of *Le dernier de Monsieur Paul de Kock*.

* * *

There is not much to amuse, and a good deal to dislike, in the scraps from Mr. Thackeray's waste-paper basket called 'Sultan Stork, and other Papers.' One amusing thing, however, is the reproach which the editor addresses to Messrs. Smith and Elder

for reprinting some of the 'Snob Papers,' rejected by Mr. Thackeray himself. Why, they did it, of course, to prevent people like this editor from doing the same thing. 'I am half sorry that this burlesque should be revived,' says Mr. Swinburne, speaking of a piece attributed, rightly or wrongly, to Mr. Thackeray in his youth. I am whole sorry. Where is the good in publishing such stuff as the verses in this assortment? 'Every careless word' a great man writes, and forgets, or tries to bury, may be dragged out and republished, for whose diversion it is hard to say. There is no harm in the verses, but better are printed, every week, in every penny comic paper. One old article, 'Dickens in France,' a defence of Dickens against Jules Janin, has interesting points. Once more we see how loyal Mr. Thackeray was to his great contemporary, whose battles he fought even in a foreign land. 'Some day the writer meditates a great and splendid review of J. J.'s work,' says Thackeray, but the day never came, and J. J. is a little forgotten by his countrymen, and quite unknown in England. Peace be with him, he was a bookman after all, and wrote *L'Amour des Livres*, and liked Horace.

* * *

Clever people, overeducated for their intellect, and ladies wholly devoid of the sense of humour are now so numerous and powerful, that one hardly dares to confess to admiration of Dickens. He does not make *them* laugh, indeed they are not 'tickled o' the sear.' They will agree with Jules Janin's criticism of Dickens, which I quote in French for their advantage. 'Figurez-vous donc un amas d'inventions puériles, où l'horrible et le niais se donnent la main, dans une ronde infernale; ici passent en riant de bonnes gens si bons qu'ils en sont tout-à-fait bêtes; plus loin bondissent et blasphèment toutes sortes de bandits, *κ.τ.λ.*, *u.s.w.*, &c. C'est le plus nauséabond mélange,' and so forth. Jules did not, it seems, know English, and had only seen a French adaptation of *Nicholas Nickleby*, in which Smike turns out to be Lord Clarendon. Janin could not read English, and English folk 'can't read Dickens.' They prefer Paul Bourget; prefer the Sahara of *Sapho*, and the endless, endless steppes and *tundras* of the fashionable Tolstoï. Oh England! oh my countrywomen! A day or two since I was in Mr. Bain's shop, and a rough fellow, a carter I think, or porter, came in and asked for 'a book called the *Pickwick Papers*.' One was comforted by that carter.

* * *

Every lover of Thackeray should have (but he can't get it, as the number is limited) Mr. Charles Plumptre Johnson's 'Hints to Collectors of the Original Editions of the Works of William Makepeace Thackeray.' It is a model of a useful piece of bibliography, with much agreeable news about 'outer wrappers,' and warnings against the tricks of trade. An exercise in statistics shows that a complete Thackeray collection may be purchased for about 130*l.* to 150*l.*, though some of the early things are so very scarce that their price is likely to rise, if we do not have war at least, or a revolution, or a very severe Jubilee.

* * *

The following verses are not quite as good as *Kubla Khan*, but their author says they were revealed to her in a dream, in which she saw the dance described, and the incident of the spurs and composed more or less of the poem. But all dreams do not come through the gateway of horn, and even Covenanters admit that Claverhouse was no Lothario.

THE BALLAD OF CLAVERHOUSE'S SWEETHEART.

Was it my fault, or was it yours,
  That when you danced for men to see,
Your yellow gown caught in my spurs
  And made a willing slave of me?
I know you now, but as it was,
  I loved you long before I knew;
I only saw one lady pass
  In all the dance and that was *you*!

Great Clavers'e looks at her and smiles,
  He thinks that she is fair and his;
But did he see her other whiles
  Then he would know whose love she is.
Ah, let him never see us then,
  He'd surely kill me if he knew,
I'm only one among his men,
  And thrones were not too good for you.

They say he bears a charmed life,
  The leaden bullet glances by.
He keeps his life, but ah! his wife
  He lost her, though he cannot die.

And were he king of Scotland yet
(A gallant soldier is he too!)
And were a queen beside him set,
My sweet, that queen would not be you!

V. H.

* * *

Mr. Brander Matthews has published, in New York, with Mr. Combes, a pretty little collection of 'Ballads on Books.' One misses Martial, Clement Marot, Joseph Boulmier, and doubtless other additions might be suggested. Among the English contributions, the new pieces at least, I like Mr. Arthur J. Munby's *Ex Libris* best, and his 'On an Inscription.' There are a few misprints which destroy both rhyme and reason in the book. Parnell must have written:—

His *roses* nipt in every page,
My poor Anacreon mourns thy rage,

not

His *rose* nipt in every page.

There are some pleasant American contributions from Mr. Clinton Scollard and Mr. Peck, whose poems one has not seen on this side of 'the salt unplumbed estranging sea.'

* * *

The 'Blind Fisherman of Tweedside,' William Rankin, is dead at the age of 64. This remarkable man,—who might have furnished Wordsworth with a subject for his Muse in her more fortunate mood,—lost his sight after an attack of small-pox. Blind as he was, he learned to make fishing-tackle, and even dressed his own flies. With those he caught heavy baskets of trout in the deep and dangerous and much-poached waters of the Tweed near St. Boswell's. He was also an adept in gardening. Like many blind people he was 'free from repining,' and of him, as of Mr. Fawcett, it may be said that 'he did his duty in life like a man.' The dark soft summer nights, so still that only the plash of rising trout breaks the silence, will know him and his one attendant, his dog, no more.

ANDREW LANG.

The 'Donna.'

THE EDITOR begs to acknowledge the receipt of the following subscriptions. Contributions should be addressed to the Editor of LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE, Paternoster Row, London, E.C. All amounts received after February 13 will be acknowledged in the April number.

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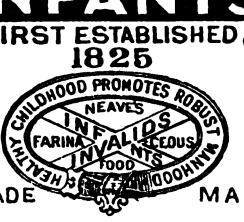

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Allan Quatermain:

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF HIS

FURTHER ADVENTURES AND DISCOVERIES IN COMPANY WITH SIR HENRY CURTIS, BART., COMMANDER JOHN GOOD, R.N., AND ONE UMSLOPOGAAS.

BY H. RIDER HAGGARD, AUTHOR OF 'SHE,' 'KING SOLOMON'S MINES,' &c.

Ex Africa semper aliquid novi.

CHAPTER X.

THE ROSE OF FIRE.

ON we flew, drawn by the mighty current, till at last I noticed that the sound of the water was not half so deafening as it had been, and concluded that this must be because there was more room for the echoes to disperse in. I could now hear Alphonse's howls much more distinctly; they were made up of the oddest mixture of invocations to the Supreme Power and the name of his beloved Annette that it is possible to conceive; and, in short, though their evident earnestness saved them from profanity, were, to say the least, very remarkable.[1] Taking up a paddle I managed to drive it into his ribs, whereon he, thinking that the end had come,

[1] Sir Henry afterwards wrote down one of Alphonse's prayers as he overheard it. It ran thus: 'Oh, save me! Take me out of this hole! I will promise never to go exploring again! Oh, Annette, why did I leave thee? Oh, my false cousin! Oh, deliver me from this horrible main drain! Never mind the others! Let them drown; they are more used to it than I am, and they cannot cook! Oh Annette! Annette [*crescendo*]! Annette [*fortissimo*]!'

howled louder than ever. Then I slowly and cautiously r myself on my knees and stretched my hand upwards, but e touch no roof. Next I took the paddle and lifted it above head as high as I could, but with the same result. I also th it out laterally to the right and left, but could touch noth except water. Then I bethought me that there was in the b amongst our other remaining possessions, a bull's-eye lantern a tin of oil. I groped about and found it, and having a ma on me carefully lit it, and as soon as the flame had got a hol the wick I turned it on down the boat. As it happened, the fi thing the light lit on was the white and scared face of Alphon who, thinking that it was all over at last, and that he was witne ing a preliminary celestial phenomenon, gave a terrific yell a was with difficulty reassured with the paddle. As for the oth three, Good was lying on the flat of his back, his eyeglass fixed in his eye, and gazing blankly into the upper darkness. Henry had his head resting on the thwarts of the canoe, and w his hand was trying to test the speed of the water. But when th beam of light fell upon old Umslopogaas I could really ha laughed. I think I have said that we had put a roast quarter waterbuck into the canoe. Well, it so happened that when we prostrated ourselves to avoid being swept out of the boat and in the water by the rock roof, Umslopogaas's head had come dow uncommonly near this roast buck, and so soon as he had recovere a little from the first shock of our position it occurred to him th he was hungry. Thereupon he coolly cut off a chop with Inkosi kaas, and was now employed in eating it with every appearance of satisfaction. As he afterwards explained, he thought that he wa going 'on a long journey' and preferred to start on a full stomach. It reminded me of the people who are going to be hanged and who are generally reported in the English daily papers to have made 'an excellent breakfast.'

As soon as the others saw that I had managed to light up the lamp, we bundled Alphonse into the further end of the canoe with a threat which calmed him wonderfully, that if he would insist upon making the darkness hideous with his cries we would put him out of suspense by sending him to join the Wakwafi and wait for Annette in another sphere, and began to discuss the situation as well as we could. First, however, at Good's suggestion, we bound two paddles mast-fashion in the bows so that they might give us warning against any sudden lowering of the roof of the cave or waterway. It was clear to us that we were in an underground river or, as Alphonse had defined it, 'main drain,' which carried

off the superfluous waters of the lake. Such rivers are well known to exist in many parts of the world, but it has not often been the evil fortune of explorers to travel by them. That the river was wide we could clearly see, for the light from the bull's-eye lantern failed to reach from shore to shore, although occasionally, when the current swept us either to one side or the other, we could see the rock wall of the tunnel, which, as far as we could make out, appeared to arch about twenty-five feet above our heads. As for the current itself, it ran, Good estimated, at least eight knots, and, fortunately for us, was, as is usual, fiercest in the middle of the stream. Still, our first act was to arrange that one of us, with the lantern and a pole there was in the canoe, should always be in the bows ready, if possible, to prevent us from being stove in against the side of the cave or any projecting rock. Umslopogaas, having already dined, took the first turn. This was absolutely, with one exception, all that we could do towards preserving our safety. The exception was that another of us took up a position in the stern with a paddle by means of which it was possible to more or less steer the canoe and to keep her from the sides of the cave. These matters attended to, we made a somewhat sparing meal off the cold buck's meat (for we did not know how long it might have to last us), and then feeling in rather better spirits I gave my opinion that, serious as it undoubtedly was, I did not consider our position altogether without hope, unless, indeed, the natives were right, and the river plunged straight down into the bowels of the earth. If not, it was clear that it must emerge somewhere, probably on the other side of the mountains, and in that case all we had to think of was to keep ourselves alive till we got there, wherever 'there' might be. But, of course, as Good lugubriously pointed out, on the other hand we might fall victims to a hundred unsuspected horrors—or the river might go winding away inside the earth till it dried up, in which case our fate would indeed be an awful one.

'Well, let us hope for the best and prepare ourselves for the worst,' said Sir Henry, who is always cheerful and even spirited—a very tower of strength in the time of trouble. 'We have come out of so many queer scrapes together, that somehow I almost fancy we shall come out of this,' he added.

This was excellent advice, and we proceeded to take it each in our separate way—that is, except Alphonse, who had by now sunk into a sort of terrified stupor. Good was at the helm and Umslopogaas in the bows, so there was nothing left for Sir Henry and myself to do except to lie down in the canoe and think. It certainly

was a curious, and indeed almost a weird, position to be placed —rushing along, as we were, through the bowels of the earborne on the bosom of a sort of Stygian river, something after fashion of souls being ferried by Charon, as Curtis said. And how dark it was! the feeble ray from our little lamp did but serve show the darkness. There in the bows sat old Umslopogaas like Pleasure in the poem,[1] watchful and untiring, the pole ready to his hand, and behind in the shadow I could just make the form of Good peering forward at the ray of light in order to make out how to steer with the paddle that he held and used and again dipped in the water.

'Well, well,' thought I, 'you have come in search of adventures, Allan my boy, and you have certainly got them. At your time of life, too! you ought to be ashamed of yourself; but somehow you aren't, and, awful as it all is, perhaps you will pull through after all; and if you don't, why you can't help it, you see. And when all's said and done an underground river will make very appropriate burying-place.'

At first, however, I am bound to say that the strain upon the nerves was very great. It is trying to the coolest and most experienced person not to know from one hour to another if he has five minutes more to live, but there is nothing in this world that one cannot get accustomed to, and in time we began to get accustomed even to that. And, after all, our anxiety, though no doubt natural, was, strictly speaking, illogical, seeing that we never know what is going to happen to us the next minute, even when we sit in a well-drained house with two policemen patrolling under the window—nor how long we have to live. It is all arranged for us, my sons, so what is the use of bothering?

It was nearly midday when we made our dive into darkness, and we had set our watch (Good and Umslopogaas) at two, having agreed that it should be of a duration of five hours. At seven o'clock accordingly, Sir Henry and I went on, Sir Henry at the bow and I at the stern, and the other two lay down and went to sleep. For three hours all went well, Sir Henry only finding it necessary to once push us off from the side; and I that but little steering was required to keep us straight, as the violent current did all that was needed, though occasionally the canoe showed a tendency which had to be guarded against to veer and travel broadside on. What struck me as the most curious thing about this wonderful river was: how did the air keep fresh? It

[1] Mr. Allan Quatermain misquotes—Pleasure sat at the helm.—EDITOR.

was muggy and thick, no doubt, but still not sufficiently so to render it bad or even remarkably unpleasant. The only explanation that I can suggest is that the water of the lake had sufficient air in it to keep the atmosphere of the tunnel from absolute stagnation, this air being given out as it proceeded on its headlong way. Of course I only give this solution of the mystery for what it is worth, which perhaps is not much.

When I had been for three hours or so at the helm, I began to notice a decided change in the temperature, which was getting warmer. At first I took no notice of it, but when, at the expiration of another half-hour, I found that it was getting hotter and hotter, I called to Sir Henry and asked him if he noticed it or if it was only my imagination. 'Noticed it!' he answered; 'I should think so. I am in a sort of Turkish bath.' Just about then the others woke up gasping, and were obliged to begin to discard their clothes. Here Umslopogaas had the advantage, for he did not wear any to speak of, except a moocha.

Hotter it grew, and hotter yet, till at last we could scarcely breathe, and the perspiration poured out of us. Half an hour more, and though we were all now stark naked, we could hardly bear it. The place was like an ante-chamber of the infernal regions proper. I dipped my hand into the water and drew it out almost with a cry; it was nearly boiling. We consulted a little thermometer we had—the mercury stood at 123. From the surface of the water rose a dense cloud of steam. Alphonse groaned out that we were already in purgatory, which indeed we were, though not in the sense that he meant it. Sir Henry suggested that we must be passing near the seat of some underground volcanic fire, and I am inclined to think, especially in the light of what subsequently occurred, that he was right. Our sufferings for some time after this really pass my powers of description. We no longer perspired, for all the perspiration had been sweated out of us. We simply lay in the bottom of the boat, which we were now physically incapable of directing, feeling like hot embers, and I fancy undergoing very much the same sensations that the poor fish do when they are dying on land, namely, that of slow suffocation. Our skin began to crack, and the blood to throb in our heads like the beating of a steam-engine.

This had been going on for some time, when suddenly the river turned a little, and I heard Sir Henry call out from the bows in a hoarse, startled voice, and, looking up, saw a most wonderful and awful thing. About half a mile ahead of us, and a little to

the left of the centre of the stream—which we could now see v about ninety feet broad—a huge pillar-like jet of almost wh flame rose from the surface of the water and sprang fifty fe into the air, when it struck the roof and spread out some forty fe in diameter, falling back in curved sheets of fire shaped like the pe of a full-blown rose. Indeed this awful gas jet resembled nothi so much as a great flaming flower rising out of the black wa Below was the straight stalk, a foot or more thick, and above it dreadful bloom. And as for the fearfulness of it and its fier and awesome beauty, who can describe it? Certainly I cann Although we were now some five hundred yards away, it, notwi standing the steam, lit up the whole cavern as clear as day, a we could see that the roof was here about forty feet above us, a washed perfectly smooth with water. The rock was black, a here and there I could make out long shining lines of ore runni through it like great veins, but of what metal they were I kn not.

On we rushed towards this pillar of fire, which gleamed fierce than any furnace ever lit by man.

'Keep the boat to the right, Quatermain—to the right,' shouted Sir Henry, and a minute afterwards I saw him fall forward senseless. Alphonse had already gone. Good was the next to go There they lay as though dead; only Umslopogaas and I kept our senses. We were within fifty yards of it now, and I saw the Zulu's head fall forward on his hands. He had gone, too, and I was alone. I could not breathe; the fierce heat dried me up For yards and yards round the great rose of fire the rock roof was red-hot. The wood of the boat was almost burning. I saw the feathers on one of the dead swans begin to twist and shrivel up; but I would not give in. I knew that if I did we should pass within three or four yards of the gas jet and perish miserably. I set the paddle so as to turn the canoe as far from it as possible, and held on grimly.

My eyes seemed to be bursting from my head, and through my closed lids I could see the fierce light. We were nearly opposite now: it roared like all the fires of hell, and the water boiled furiously around it. Five seconds more. We were past; I heard the roar behind me.

Then I, too, fell senseless. The next thing that I remember was feeling a breath of air upon my face. My eyes opened with great difficulty. I looked up. Far, far above me there was light, though around me was deep gloom. Then I remembered and

looked. The canoe still floated down the river, and in the bottom of it lay the naked forms of my companions. 'Were they dead?' I wondered. 'Was I left alone in this awful place?' I knew not. Next I became conscious of a burning thirst. I put my hand over the edge of the boat into the water and drew it up again with a cry. No wonder: nearly all the skin was burnt off the back of it. The water, however, was cold, or nearly so, and I drank pints and splashed myself all over. My body seemed to suck up the fluid as one may see a brick wall suck up rain after a drought; but where I was burnt the touch of it caused intense pain. Then I bethought myself of the others, and, dragging myself towards them with difficulty, I sprinkled them with water, and to my joy they began to recover—Umslopogaas first, then the others. Next they drank, absorbing water like so many sponges. Then, feeling chilly—a queer contrast to our recent sensations—we began as best we could to get into our clothes. As we did so Good pointed to the port side of the canoe: it was all blistered with heat, and in places actually charred. Had it been built like our civilised boats, Good said that the planks would have certainly warped and let in enough water to sink us; but fortunately it was dug out of the soft, willowy wood of a single great tree, and had sides nearly three inches and a bottom four inches thick. What that awful flame was we never discovered, but I suppose that there was at this spot a crack or hole in the bed of the river through which a vast volume of gas forced its way from its volcanic home in the bowels of the earth towards the upper air. How it first became ignited it is, of course, impossible to say—probably, I should think, from some spontaneous explosion of mephitic gases.

As soon as we had got some things on and shaken ourselves together a little, we set to work to make out where we were now. I have said that there was light above, and on examination we found that it came from the sky. Our river that was, Sir Henry said, a literal realisation of the wild vision of the poet,[1] was no longer underground, but was running on its darksome way, not now through 'caverns measureless to man,' but between two frightful cliffs which cannot have been less than two thousand feet high. So high were they, indeed, that though the sky was above us, where we were was dense gloom—not darkness indeed, but

[1] In Kubla Khan a river ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.

the gloom of a room closely shuttered in the daytime. Up on either side rose the great straight cliffs, grim and forbidding, till the eye grew dizzy with trying to measure their sheer height. The little space of sky that marked where they ended lay like a thread of blue upon their soaring blackness, which was unrelieved by any tree or creeper. Here and there, however, grew ghostly patches of a long grey lichen, hanging motionless to the rock as the white beard to the chin of a dead man. It seemed as though only the dregs or heavier part of the light had sunk to the bottom of this awful place. No bright-winged sunbeam could fall so low: they died far, far above our heads.

By the river's edge was a little shore formed of round fragments of rock washed into this shape by the constant action of water, and giving the place the appearance of being strewn with thousands of fossil cannon balls. Evidently when the water of the underground river is high there is no beach at all, or very little, between the border of the stream and the precipitous cliffs; but now there was a space of seven or eight yards. And here, on this beach, we determined to land, in order to rest ourselves a little after all that we had gone through and to stretch our limbs. It was a dreadful place, but it would give an hour's respite from the terrors of the river, and also allow of our repacking and arranging the canoe. Accordingly we selected what looked like a favourable spot, and with some little difficulty managed to beach the canoe and scramble out on to the round, inhospitable pebbles.

'My word,' called out Good, who was on shore the first, 'what an awful place! it's enough to give one a fit.' And he laughed.

Instantly a thundering voice took up his words, magnifying them a hundred times. '*Give one a fit—Ho! ho! ho!*'—'*A fit, Ho! ho! ho!*' answered another voice in wild accents from far up the cliff—*a fit! a fit! a fit!* chimed in voice after voice—each flinging the words to and fro with shouts of awful laughter to the invisible lips of the other till the whole place echoed with the words and with shrieks of fiendish merriment, which at last ceased as suddenly as they had begun.

'Oh, mon Dieu!' yelled Alphonse, startled quite out of such self-command as he possessed.

'*Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!*' the Titanic echoes thundered, shrieked, and wailed in every conceivable tone.

'Ah,' said Umslopogaas calmly, 'I clearly perceive that devils live here. Well, the place looks like it.'

I tried to explain to him that the cause of all the hubbub was

a very remarkable and interesting echo, but he would not believe it.

'Ah,' he said, 'I know an echo when I hear one. There was one lived opposite my kraal in Zululand, and the Intombis [maidens] used to talk with it. But if what we hear is a full-grown echo, mine at home can only have been a baby. No, no—they are devils up there. But I don't think much of them, though,' he added, taking a pinch of snuff. 'They can copy what one says, but they don't seem to be able to talk on their own account, and they dare not show their faces,' and he relapsed into silence, and apparently paid no further attention to such contemptible fiends.

After this we found it necessary to keep our conversation down to a whisper—for it was really unbearable to have every word one uttered tossed to and fro like a tennis-ball, as precipice called to precipice.

But even our whispers ran up the rocks in mysterious murmurs till at last they died away in long-drawn sighs of sound. Echoes are delightful and romantic things, but we had more than enough of them in that dreadful gulf.

As soon as we had settled ourselves a little on the round stones, we proceeded to wash ourselves and dress our burns as well as we could. As we had but a little oil for the lantern, we could not spare any for this purpose, so we skinned one of the swans and used the fat off its breast, which proved an excellent substitute. Then we repacked the canoe, and finally proceeded to take some food, of which I need scarcely say we were in need, for our insensibility had endured for many hours, and it was, as our watches showed, mid-day. Accordingly we seated ourselves in a circle, and were soon engaged in discussing our cold meat with such appetite as we could muster, which, in my case at any rate, was not much, as I felt sick and faint after my sufferings of the previous night, and had besides a racking headache. It was a curious meal. The gloom was so intense that we could scarcely see the way to cut our food and convey it to our mouths. Still we got on pretty well, although the meat was tainted by the heat through which it had passed, till I happened to look behind me—my attention being attracted by a noise of something crawling over the stones, and perceived sitting upon a rock in my immediate rear a huge species of black freshwater crab, only it was five times the size of any crab I ever saw. This hideous and loathsome-looking animal had projecting eyes that seemed to glare at

one, very long and flexible antennæ or feelers, and gigantic claws. Nor was I especially favoured with its company. From every quarter dozens of these horrid brutes were creeping up, drawn, I suppose, by the smell of the food, from between the round stones and out of holes in the precipice. Some were already quite close to us. I stared quite fascinated by the unusual sight, and as I did so I saw one of the beasts stretch out its huge claw and give the unsuspecting Good such a nip behind that he jumped up with a howl, and set the 'wild echoes flying' in sober earnest. Just then, too, another, a very large one, got hold of Alphonse's leg, and declined to part with it, and, as may be imagined, a considerable scene ensued. Umslopogaas took his axe and cracked the shell of one with the flat of it, whereon it set up a horrid sort of screaming which the echoes multiplied a thousandfold, and began to foam at the mouth, a proceeding that drew hundreds more of its friends out of unsuspected holes and corners. Those on the spot perceiving that the animal was hurt fell upon it like creditors on a bankrupt, and literally rent it limb from limb with their huge pincers and devoured it, using their claws to convey the fragments to their mouths. Seizing whatever weapons were handy, such as stones or paddles, we commenced a war upon the monsters—whose numbers were increasing by leaps and bounds, and whose stench was overpowering. So fast as we cracked their armour others seized the injured ones and devoured them, foaming at the mouth, and screaming as they did so. Nor did the brutes stop at that. When they could they nipped hold of us—and awful nips they were—or tried to steal the meat. One enormous fellow got hold of the swan we had skinned and began to drag it off. Instantly a score of others flung themselves upon the prey, and then began a ghastly and disgusting scene. How the monsters foamed and screamed, and rent the flesh, and each other! It was a sickening and unnatural sight, and one that will haunt all who saw it till their dying day—enacted as it was in the deep, oppressive gloom, and set to the unceasing music of the many-toned nerve-shaking echoes. Strange as it may seem to say so, there was something so shockingly human about these fiendish creatures—it was as though all the most evil passions and desires of man had got into the shell of a magnified crab and gone mad. They were so dreadfully courageous and intelligent, and they looked as if they *understood*. The whole scene might have furnished material for another canto of Dante's 'Inferno,' as Curtis said.

'I say, you fellows, let's get out of this or we shall all go off our heads,' sung out Good; and we were not slow to take the hint. Pushing the canoe, around which the animals were now crawling by hundreds and making vain attempts to climb, off the rocks, we bundled into it and got out into mid-stream, leaving behind us the fragments of our meal and the screaming, foaming, stinking mass of monsters in full possession of the grounds.

'Those are the devils of the place,' said Umslopogaas with the air of one who has solved a problem, and upon my word I felt almost inclined to agree with him.

Umslopogaas's remarks were like his axe—very much to the point.

'What's to be done next?' said Sir Henry blankly.

'Drift, I suppose,' I answered, and we drifted accordingly. All the afternoon and well into the evening we floated on in the gloom beneath the far-off line of blue sky, scarcely knowing when day ended and night began, for down in that vast gulf the difference was not marked, till at length Good pointed out a star hanging right above us, which, having nothing better to do, we observed with great interest. Suddenly it vanished, the darkness became intense, and a familiar murmuring sound filled the air. 'Underground again,' I said with a groan, holding up the lamp. Yes, there was no doubt about it. I could just make out the roof. The chasm had come to an end and the tunnel had recommenced. And then began another long, long night of danger and horror. To describe all its incidents would be too wearisome, so I will simply say that about midnight we struck on a flat projecting rock in mid-stream and were as nearly as possible overturned and drowned. However, at last we got off, and proceeded upon the uneven tenor of our way. And so the hours passed till it was nearly three o'clock. Sir Henry, Good, and Alphonse were asleep, utterly worn out; Umslopogaas was at the bow with the pole, and I was steering when I perceived that the rate at which we were travelling had perceptibly increased. Then, suddenly, I heard Umslopogaas make an exclamation, and next second came a sound as of parting branches, and I became aware that the canoe was being forced through hanging bushes or creepers. Another minute, and a breath of sweet open air fanned my face, and I felt that we had emerged from the tunnel and were floating upon clear water. I say felt, for I could see nothing, the darkness being absolutely pitchy, as it often is just before the dawn. But even this could scarcely damp my joy. We were out of that dreadful

river, and wherever we might have got to this at least was something to be thankful for. And so I sat down and inhaled the sweet night air and waited for the dawn with such patience as could command.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FROWNING CITY.

For an hour or more I sat waiting (Umslopogaas having meanwhile gone to sleep also) till at length the east turned grey, and huge misty shapes moved over the surface of the water like ghosts of long-forgotten dawns. They were the vapours rising from their watery bed to greet the sun. Then the grey turned to primrose, and the primrose grew to red. Next, glorious bars of light sprang up across the eastern sky, and through them the radiant messengers of the dawn came speeding upon their arrowy way, scattering the ghostly vapours and awaking the mountains with a kiss, as they flew from range to range and longitude to longitude. Another moment, and the golden gates were open and the sun himself came forth as a bridegroom from his chamber, with pomp and glory and a flashing as of ten million spears, and embraced the night and covered her with brightness, and it was day.

But as yet I could see nothing save the beautiful blue sky above, for over the water was a thick layer of mist exactly as though the whole surface had been covered with billows of cotton wool. By degrees, however, the sun sucked up the mists, and then I saw that we were afloat upon a glorious sheet of blue water of which I could not make out the shore. Some eight or ten miles behind us, however, there stretched as far as the eye could reach a range of precipitous hills that formed a retaining wall of the lake, and I have no doubt but that it was through some entrance in these hills that the subterranean river found its way into the open water. Indeed, I afterwards ascertained this to be the fact, and it will be some indication of the extraordinary strength and directness of the current of the mysterious river that the canoe, even at this distance, was still answering to it. Presently, too, I, or rather Umslopogaas, who woke up just then, discovered another indication, and a very unpleasant one it was. Perceiving some whitish object upon the water, Umslopogaas called my attention to it, and with a few strokes of the paddle brought the canoe

to the spot, whereupon we discovered that the object was the body of a man floating face downwards. This was bad enough, but imagine my horror when, Umslopogaas having turned him on to his back with the paddle, we recognised in the sunken features the lineaments of——whom do you suppose? None other than our poor servant who had been sucked down two days before in the waters of the subterranean river. It gave me quite a turn. I thought that we had left him behind for ever, and behold! borne by the current, he had made the awful journey with us, and with us had reached the end. His appearance also was very dreadful. He had been a black man, now he was a livid white, for the boiling water had scalded off nearly all his outer skin. Also he bore traces of having touched the pillar of fire—one arm being completely shrivelled up and all his hair being burnt off. The features were, as I have said, sunken, and yet they preserved upon them that awful look of despair that I had seen upon his living face as the poor fellow was sucked down. Really the sight quite unnerved me, weary and shaken as I felt with all that we had gone through, and I was heartily glad when suddenly and without any warning the body began to sink just as though it had had a mission, which having been accomplished, it retired; the real reason no doubt being that turning it on its back allowed a free passage to the gas. Down it went into the transparent depths—fathom after fathom we could trace its course till at last a long line of bright air-bubbles, swiftly chasing each other to the surface, alone remained where it had passed. At length these, too, were gone, and that was an end of our poor servant. Umslopogaas thoughtfully watched the body vanish.

'What did he follow us for?' he asked. 'Tis an ill omen for thee and me, Macumazahn.' And he laughed.

I turned on him angrily, for I dislike these unpleasant suggestions. If people have such ideas, they ought in common decency to keep them to themselves. I detest individuals who make one the subject of their disagreeable presentiments, or who, when they dream that they saw one hanged as a common felon, or some such horror, will insist upon telling one all about it at breakfast, even if they have to get up early to do it.

Just then, however, the others woke up and began to rejoice exceedingly at finding that we were out of that dreadful river and once more beneath the blue sky. Then followed a babel of talk and suggestions as to what we were to do next, the upshot of all of which was that as we were excessively hungry, and had nothing

whatsoever left to eat except a few scraps of biltong (dried game-flesh), having abandoned all that remained of our provisions to those horrible freshwater crabs, we determined to make for the shore. But now a new difficulty arose. We did not know where the shore was, and, with the exception of the cliffs through which the subterranean river made its entry, could see nothing but a wide expanse of sparkling blue water. Observing, however, that the long flights of aquatic birds kept flying from our left, we concluded that they were advancing from their feeding-grounds on shore to pass the day in the lake, and accordingly headed the boat towards the quarter whence they came, and began to paddle. Before long, however, a stiffish breeze sprang up, blowing directly in the direction we wanted, so we improvised a sail with a blanket and the pole, which took us along merrily. This done, we proceeded to devour the remnants of our biltong, washed down with the sweet lake water, and then lit our pipes and awaited whatever might turn up.

When we had been sailing for an hour, Good, who was searching the horizon with the spy-glass, suddenly announced joyfully that he saw land, and pointed out that, from the change in the colour of the water, he thought we must be approaching the mouth of a river. In another minute we perceived a great golden dome, not unlike that of St. Paul's, piercing the morning mists, and while we were wondering what in the world it could be, Good reported another and still more important discovery, namely, that a small sailing-boat was advancing towards us. This bit of news, which we were very shortly able to verify with our own eyes, threw us into a considerable flutter. That the natives of this unknown lake should understand the art of sailing seemed to suggest that they possessed some degree of civilisation. In a few more minutes it became evident that the occupant or occupants of the advancing boat had made us out. For a moment or two she hung in the wind as though in doubt, and then came tacking towards us with great swiftness. In ten more minutes she was within a hundred yards, and we saw that she was a neat little boat—not a canoe 'dug out,' but built more or less in the European fashion with planks, and carrying a singularly large sail for her size. But our attention was soon diverted from the boat to her crew, which consisted of a man and woman, *nearly as white as ourselves.*

We stared at each other in amazement, thinking that we must be mistaken; but no, there was no doubt about it. They were not fair, but the two people in the boat were decidedly of a white

as distinguished from a black race, as white, for instance, as Spaniards or Italians. It was a patent fact. So it was true, after all; and, mysteriously led by a Power beyond our own, we had discovered this wonderful people. I could have shouted for joy when I thought of the glory and the wonder of the thing; and as it was, we all shook hands and congratulated each other on the unexpected success of our wild search. All my life had I heard rumours of a white race that existed in the highlands of the interior of this vast continent, and longed to put them to the proof, and now here I saw it with my own eyes, and was dumbfounded. Truly, as Sir Henry said, the old Roman was right when he wrote 'Ex Africa semper aliquid novi,' which he tells me means that out of Africa there always comes some new thing.

The man in the boat was of a good but not particularly fine physique, and possessed straight black hair, regular aquiline features, and an intelligent face. He was dressed in a sort of brown cloth garment, something like a flannel shirt without the sleeves, and in an unmistakable kilt of the same material. The legs and feet were bare. Round the right arm and left leg he wore thick rings of yellow metal that I judged to be gold. The woman had a sweet face, wild and shy, with large eyes and curling brown hair. Her dress was made of the same material as the man's, and consisted, as we afterwards discovered, first of a linen under-garment that hung down to her knee, and then of a single long strip of cloth, about four feet wide by fifteen long, which was wound round the body in graceful folds and finally flung over the left shoulder so that the end, which was dyed blue or purple or some other colour, according to the social standing of the wearer, hung down in front, the right arm and breast being, however, left quite bare. A more becoming dress, especially when, as in the present case, the wearer was young and pretty, it is quite impossible to conceive. Good (who has an eye for such things) was greatly struck with it, and so indeed was I. It was so simple and yet so effective.

Meanwhile, if we had been astonished at the appearance of the man and woman, it was clear that they were far more astonished at us. As for the man, he appeared to be overcome with fear and wonder, and for a while hovered round our canoe, but would not approach. At last, however, he came within hailing distance, and called to us in a language that sounded soft and pleasing enough, but of which we could not understand one word. So we hailed back in English, French, Latin, Greek, German, Zulu, Dutch,

Sisutu, Kukuana, and a few other native dialects that I am acquainted with, but our visitor did not understand any of the tongues; indeed, they appeared to bewilder him. As for the lady, she was busily employed in taking stock of us, and Good was returning the compliment by staring at her hard through his eyeglass, a proceeding that she seemed rather to enjoy than otherwise. At length the man, being unable to make anything out of us, suddenly headed his boat round and began to head off for the shore, his little boat skimming away before the wind like a swallow. As she passed across our bows the man turned to attend to the large sail, and Good promptly took the opportunity to kiss his hand to the young lady. I was horrified at this proceeding, both on general grounds and because I feared she might take offence, but to my delight she did not, for, first glancing round and seeing that her husband, or brother, or whoever it was, was engaged, she promptly kissed hers back.

'Ah!' said I. 'It seems that we have at last found a language that the people of this country understand.'

'In which case,' said Sir Henry, 'Good will prove an invaluable interpreter.'

I frowned, for I do not approve of Good's frivolities, and he knows it, and turned the conversation to more serious subjects. 'It is very clear to me,' I said, 'that that man will be back before long with a host of his fellows, so we had best make up our minds as to how we are going to receive them.'

'The question is how will they receive us,' said Sir Henry.

As for Good he made no remark, but began to extract a small square tin case that had accompanied us in all our wanderings from under a pile of things. Now we had often remonstrated with Good about this tin case, inasmuch as it had been an awkward thing to carry, and he had never given any very explicit account as to its contents; but he had insisted on sticking to it, saying mysteriously that it might come in very useful one day.

'What on earth are you going to do, Good?' asked Sir Henry.

'Do—why dress, of course! You don't expect me to appear in a new country in these things, do you?' and he pointed to his soiled and worn garments, which were however, like all Good's things, very tidy, and with every tear neatly mended.

We said no more, but watched his proceedings with breathless interest. His first step was to get Alphonse, who was thoroughly competent in such matters, to trim his hair and beard in the most

approved fashion. I think that if he had had some hot water and a cake of soap handy he would have shaved off the latter; but he had not. This done, he suggested that we should lower the sail of the canoe and all take a bath, which we did, greatly to the horror and astonishment of Alphonse, who lifted his hands and ejaculated that these English were indeed a wonderful people. Umslopogaas, who though he was, like most high-bred Zulus, scrupulously cleanly in his person, did not see the fun of swimming about in a lake, also regarded the proceeding with mild amusement. We got back into the canoe much refreshed by the cold water, and sat to dry in the sun, whilst Good undid his tin box, and produced first a beautiful clean white shirt, just as it had left a London steam laundry, and then some garments wrapped first in brown, then in white, and finally in silver paper. We watched this undoing with the tenderest interest and much speculation. One by one Good removed the dull husks that hid their splendours, carefully folding and replacing each piece of paper as he did so; and there at last lay, in all the majesty of its gold epaulettes, lace, and buttons, a Commander of the Royal Navy's full-dress uniform—dress sword, cocked hat, shiny patent leather boots and all. We literally gasped.

'*What!*' we said, '*what!* Are you going to put those things on?'

'Certainly,' he answered composedly; 'you see so much depends upon a first impression, especially,' he added, 'as I observe that there are ladies about. One at least of us ought to be decently dressed.'

We said no more; we were simply dumbfounded, especially when we considered the artful way in which Good had concealed the contents of that box for all these months. Only one suggestion did we make, namely, that he should wear his mail shirt next his skin. He replied that he feared it would spoil the set of his coat, now carefully spread in the sun to take the creases out, but finally consented to this precautionary measure. The most amusing part of the affair, however, was to see old Umslopogaas's astonishment and Alphonse's delight at Good's transformation. When at last he stood up in all his glory, even down to the medals on his breast, and contemplated himself in the still waters of the lake, after the fashion of the young gentleman in ancient history, whose name I can't remember, but who fell in love with his own shadow, the old Zulu could no longer restrain his feelings.

'Oh, Bougwan!' he said, 'Oh, Bougwan! I always thought

thee an ugly little man, and fat—fat as the cows at calving time; and now thou art like a blue jay when he spreads his tail out: Surely, Bougwan, it hurts my eyes to look at thee.'

Good did not much like this allusion to his fat, which, to tell the truth, was not very well deserved, for hard exercise had brought him down four inches; but on the whole he was pleased at Umslopogaas's admiration. As for Alphonse, he was quite delighted.

'Ah! but Monsieur has the beautiful air—the air of the warrior. It is the ladies who will say so when we come to get ashore. Monsieur is complete; he puts me in mind of my heroic grand——'

Here we stopped Alphonse.

As we gazed upon these beauties thus revealed by Good, a spirit of emulation filled our breasts, and we set to work to get ourselves up as well as we could. The most, however, that we were able to do was to array ourselves in our spare suits of shooting clothes, of which we each had one, keeping on our mail shirts underneath. As for my appearance, all the fine clothes in the world could never make it otherwise than scrubby and insignificant; but Sir Henry looked what he is, a magnificent man in his nearly new tweed suit, gaiters, and boots. Alphonse also got himself up to kill, giving an extra turn to his enormous moustaches. Even old Umslopogaas, who was not in a general way given to the vain adorning of his body, got hold of some oil out of the lantern and a bit of tow, and polished up his head-ring with it till it shone like Good's patent leather boots. Then he put on the mail shirt Sir Henry had given him and his 'moocha,' and, having cleaned up Inkosi-kaas a little, stood forth complete.

All this while we had, having hoisted the sail again as soon as we had bathed, been progressing steadily for the land, or, rather, for the mouth of a great river. Presently—in all about an hour and a half after the little boat had left us—we saw emerging from the river or harbour a large number of boats, ranging up to ten or twelve tons burden. One of these was propelled by twenty-four oars, and most of the rest sailed. Looking through the glass we soon made out that the row-boat was an official vessel, her crew being all dressed in a sort of uniform, whilst on the half-deck forward stood an old man of venerable appearance, and with a flowing white beard, and a sword strapped to his side, who was evidently the commander of the craft. The other boats were apparently occupied by people drawn out of curiosity, and were rowing or sailing towards us as quickly as they could.

'Now for it,' said I. 'What is the betting? Are they going to be friendly or to put an end to us?'

Nobody could answer this question, and, not liking the warlike appearance of the old gentleman and his sword, we felt a little anxious.

Just then Good spied a school of hippopotami on the water about two hundred yards off us, and suggested that it would not be a bad plan to impress the natives with a sense of our power by shooting some of them if possible. This, unluckily enough, struck us as a good idea, and accordingly we at once got out our eight-bore rifles, for which we still had a few cartridges left, and prepared for action. There were four of the animals, a big bull, a cow, and two young ones, one three parts grown. We got up to them without difficulty, the great animals contenting themselves with sinking down into the water and rising again a few yards farther on; indeed, their excessive tameness struck me as being peculiar. When the advancing boats were about five hundred yards away, Sir Henry opened the ball by firing at the three-parts grown young one. The heavy bullet struck it fair between the eyes, and, crashing through the skull, killed it, and it sank, leaving a long train of blood behind it. At the same moment I fired at the cow and Good at the old bull. My shot took effect, but not fatally, and down went the hippopotamus with a prodigious splashing, only to rise again presently blowing and grunting furiously, dyeing all the water round her crimson, when I killed her with the left barrel. Good, who is an execrable shot, missed the head of the bull altogether, the bullet merely cutting the side of his face as it passed. On glancing up, after I had fired my second shot, I perceived that the people we had fallen among were evidently ignorant of the nature of firearms, for the consternation caused by our shots and their effect upon the animals was prodigious. Some of the parties in the boats began to cry out with fear; others turned and made off as hard as they could; and even the old gentleman with the sword looked greatly puzzled and alarmed, and halted his big row-boat. We had, however, but little time for observation, for just then the old bull, rendered furious by the wound he had received, rose fair within forty yards of us, glaring savagely. We all fired, and hit him in various places, and down he went, badly wounded. Curiosity now began to overcome the fear of the onlookers, and some of them sailed on up close to us, amongst these being the man and woman whom we had first seen a couple of hours or so before, who drew up almost

alongside. Just then the great brute rose again within ten yards of their boat, and instantly with a roar of fury made at it open-mouthed. The woman shrieked, and the man tried to give the way, but without success. In another second I saw the huge jaws and gleaming ivories close with a crunch on the frail craft, taking an enormous mouthful out of its side and capsizing it. Down went the boat, leaving its occupants struggling in the water. No moment, before we could do anything towards saving them, the huge and furious creature was up again and making open-mouth at the poor girl, who was struggling in the water. Lifting my rifle just as the grinding jaws were about to close on her, I fired over his head right down the hippopotamus's throat. Over he went, and commenced turning round and round, snorting, and blowing streams of blood through his nostrils. Before he could recover himself, however, I let him have the other barrel in the side of the throat, and that finished him. He never moved or struggled again, but instantly sank. Our next effort was directed towards saving the girl, the man having swum off towards another boat, and in this we were fortunately successful, pulling her into the canoe (amidst the shouts of the spectators) considerably exhausted and frightened, but otherwise unhurt.

Meanwhile the boats had gathered together at a distance, and we could see that their occupants, who were evidently much frightened, were consulting what to do. Without giving them time for further consideration, which we thought might result unfavourably to ourselves, we instantly took our paddles and advanced towards them, Good standing in the bow and taking off his cocked hat politely in every direction, his amiable features suffused by a bland but intelligent smile. Most of the craft retreated as we advanced, but a few held their ground, while the big row-boat came on to meet us. Presently we were alongside, and I could see that our appearance—and especially Good's and Umslopogaas's—filled the venerable-looking commander with astonishment, not unmixed with awe. He was dressed after the same fashion as the man we first met, except that his shirt was not made of brown cloth, but of pure white linen hemmed with purple. The kilt, however, was identical, and so were the thick rings of gold around the arm and beneath the left knee. The rowers wore only a kilt, their bodies being naked to the waist. Good took off his hat to the old gentleman with an extra flourish, and inquired after his health in the purest English, to which he replied by laying the first two fingers of his right hand horizon-

tally across his lips and holding them there for a moment, which we took as his method of salutation. Then he also addressed some remarks to us in the same soft accents that had distinguished our first interviewer, which we were forced to indicate we did not understand by shaking our heads and shrugging our shoulders. This last Alphonse, being to the manner born, did to perfection, and in so polite a way that nobody could take any offence. Then we came to a standstill, till I, being exceedingly hungry, thought I might as well call attention to the fact, and did so first by opening my mouth and pointing down it, and then rubbing my stomach. These signals the old gentleman clearly understood, for he nodded his head vigorously, and pointed towards the harbour; and at the same time one of the men on his boat threw us a line and motioned to us to make it fast, which we did. The row-boat then took us in tow, and proceeded with great rapidity towards the mouth of the river, accompanied by all the other boats. In about twenty minutes more we reached the entrance to the harbour, which was crowded with boats full of people who had come out to see us. We observed that all the occupants were more or less of the same type, though some were fairer than others. Indeed, we noticed certain ladies whose skin was of a most dazzling whiteness; and the darkest shade of colour which we saw was about that of a rather swarthy Spaniard. Presently the wide river gave a sweep, and when it did so an exclamation of astonishment and delight burst from our lips as we caught our first view of the place that we afterwards knew as Milosis, or the Frowning City (from the prefix *mi*, which means city, and *losis*, a frown).

At a distance of some five hundred yards from the river's bank rose a sheer precipice of granite, two hundred feet or so in height, which had no doubt once formed the bank itself—the intermediate space of land now utilised as docks and roadways having been gained by draining, and deepening and embanking the stream.

On the brow of this precipice stood a great building of the same granite that formed the cliff, built on three sides of a square, the fourth side being open, save for a kind of battlement pierced at its base by a little door. This imposing place we afterwards discovered was the palace of the queen, or rather of the queens. At the back of the palace the town sloped gently upwards to a flashing building of white marble, crowned by the golden dome which we had already observed. The city was, with the exception of this one building, entirely built of red granite, and laid out in

regular blocks with splendid roadways between. So far as we could see also the houses were all one-storied and detached, with gardens round them, which gave some relief to the eye wearied with the sight of red granite. At the back of the palace a road of extraordinary width stretched away up the hill for a distance of a mile and a half or so, and appeared to terminate at an open space surrounding the gleaming building that crowned the hill. But right in front of us was the crowning wonder and glory of Milosis—the great staircase of the palace, the magnificence of which fairly took our breath away. Let the reader imagine, if he can, a splendid stairway, sixty-five feet from balustrade to balustrade, consisting of two vast flights, each of one hundred and twenty-five steps of eight inches in height by three feet broad, connected by a flat resting-place sixty feet in length, and running from the palace wall on the edge of the precipice down to meet a waterway or canal cut to its foot from the river. This marvellous staircase was supported upon a single enormous granite arch, of which the resting-place between the two flights formed the crown; that is, the connecting open space lay upon it. From this archway sprang a subsidiary flying arch, or rather something that resembled a flying arch in shape, such as none of us had seen in any other country, and of which the beauty and wonder surpassed all that we had ever imagined. Three hundred feet from point to point, and no less than five hundred and fifty round the curve, that half-arc soared touching the bridge it supported for a space of fifty feet only, one end resting on and built into the parent archway, and the other embedded in the solid granite of the side of the precipice.

This staircase with its supports was, indeed, a work of which any living man might have been proud, both on account of its magnitude and its surpassing beauty. Four times, as we afterwards learnt, did the work, which was commenced in remote antiquity, fail, and was then abandoned for three centuries when half-finished, till at last there arose a youthful engineer named Rademas, who said that he would complete it successfully, and staked his life upon it. If he failed he was to be hurled from the precipice he had undertaken to scale, if he succeeded he was to be rewarded by the hand of the king's daughter. Five years was given to him to complete the work, and an unlimited supply of labour and material. Three times did his arch fall, till at last, seeing failure to be inevitable, he determined to commit suicide on the morrow of the third collapse. That night, however, a beautiful woman came to him in a dream and touched his fore-

head, and of a sudden he saw a vision of the completed work, and saw too through the masonry and how the difficulties connected with the flying arch that had hitherto baffled his genius were to be overcome. Then he awoke and once more commenced the work, but on a different plan, and behold! he achieved it, and on the last day of the five years he led the princess his bride up the stair and into the palace. And in due course he became king by right of his wife, and founded the present Zu-vendi dynasty, which is to this day called the 'House of the Stairway,' thus proving once more how energy and talent are the natural stepping-stones to grandeur. And to commemorate his triumph he fashioned a statue of himself dreaming, and of the fair woman who touched him on the forehead, and placed it in the great hall of the palace, and there it stands to this day.

Such was the great stair of Milosis, and such the city beyond. No wonder they called it the 'Frowning City,' for certainly those mighty works in solid granite did seem to frown down upon our littleness in their sombre splendour. This was so even in the sunshine, but when the storm-clouds gathered on her imperial brow Milosis looked more like a supernatural dwelling-place, or some imagining of a poet's brain, than what she is—a mortal city, carven by the patient genius of generations out of the red silence of the mountain-side.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SISTER QUEENS.

THE big rowing-boat proceeded on up the cutting that ran almost to the foot of the vast stairway, and then halted at a flight of steps leading to the landing-place. Here the old gentleman disembarked, and invited us to do likewise, which, having no alternative, and being nearly starved, we did without hesitation—taking our rifles with us, however. As each of us landed, our guide again laid his fingers on his lips in salutation and bowed deeply, at the same time ordering back the crowds who had assembled to gaze on us. The last to leave the canoe was the girl we had picked out of the water, for whom her companion was waiting. Before she went away she kissed my hand, I suppose as a token of gratitude for having saved her from the fury of the

hippopotamus; and it seemed to me that she had by this time quite got over any fear she might have had of us, and was by no means anxious to return in such a hurry to her lawful owners. At any rate, she was going to kiss Good's hand as well as mine, when the young man interfered and led her off. As soon as we were on shore, a number of the men who had rowed the big boat took possession of our few goods and chattels, and started with them up the splendid staircase, our guide indicating to us by means of motions that the things were perfectly safe. This done, he turned to the right and led the way to a small house, which was, as I afterwards discovered, an inn. Entering straight into a good-sized room we, saw that a wooden table was already furnished with food, presumably in preparation for us. Here our guide motioned us to be seated on a bench that ran the length of the table. We did not require a second invitation, but at once fell to ravenously on the viands before us, which were served on wooden platters, and consisted of cold goat's-flesh, wrapped up in some kind of leaf that gave it a delicious flavour, green vegetables resembling lettuces, brown bread, and red wine poured from a skin into horn mugs. This wine was peculiarly soft and good, having something of the flavour of Burgundy. Twenty minutes after we sat down at that hospitable board we rose from it, feeling like new men. After all that we had gone through we needed two things, food and rest, and the food of itself was a great blessing to us. Two girls of the same charming cast of face as the first whom we had seen waited on us while we ate, and very nicely they did it. They were also dressed in the same fashion, namely, in a white linen petticoat coming to the knee, and with the toga-like garment of brown cloth, leaving bare the right arm and breast. I afterwards found out that this was the national dress, and regulated by an iron custom, though of course subject to variations. Thus, if the petticoat was pure white, it signified that the wearer was unmarried; if white, with a straight purple stripe round the edge, that she was married and a first or legal wife; if with a wavy purple stripe, that she was a second or other wife; if with a black stripe, that she was a widow. In the same way the toga or 'kaf,' as they call it, was of different shades of colour, from pure white to the deepest brown, according to the rank of the wearer, and embroidered at the end in various ways. This also applies to the 'shirts' or tunics worn by the men, which varied in material and colour; but the kilts were always the same except as regards quality. One thing, however, every man and woman in the

ountry wore as the national insignia, and that was the thick band of gold round the right arm above the elbow, and the left leg above the knee. People of high rank also wore a torque of gold round the neck, and I observed that our guide had one on.

So soon as we had finished our meal our venerable conductor, who had been standing all the while, regarding us with inquiring eyes, and our guns with something as like fear as his pride would allow him to show, bowed towards Good, whom he evidently took for the leader of the party on account of the splendour of his apparel, and once more led the way through the door and to the foot of the great staircase. Here we paused for a moment to admire two colossal lions, each hewn from a single block of pure black marble, and standing rampant on the terminations of the wide balustrades of the staircase. These lions are magnificently executed, and it is said were sculptured by Rademas, the great prince who designed the staircase, and who was without doubt, to judge from the many beautiful examples of his art that we saw afterwards, one of the finest sculptors who have ever lived, either in this or any other country. Then we proceeded almost with a feeling of awe up that splendid stair, a work executed for all time and that will, I do not doubt, be admired thousands of years hence by generations unborn unless an earthquake throw it down. Even Umslopogaas, who as a general rule made it a point of honour not to show astonishment, which he considered undignified, was fairly startled out of himself, and asked if the 'bridge had been built by men or devils,' which was his vague way of alluding to any supernatural power. But Alphonse did not care about it. Its solid grandeur jarred upon the frivolous little Frenchman, who said that it was all 'très magnifique, mais triste—ah, triste!' and went on to suggest that it would be improved if the balustrades were *gilt*.

On we went up the first flight of one hundred and twenty steps, across the broad platform joining it to the second flight, where we paused to admire the glorious view of one of the most beautiful stretches of country that the world can show, edged by the blue waters of the lake. Then we passed on up this till at last we reached the top, where we found a large standing space to which there were three entrances, all of small size. Two of these gave on to rather narrow galleries or roadways cut in the face of the precipice that ran round the palace walls and led to the principal thoroughfares of the city, and were used by the inhabitants passing up and down from the docks. These were defended by gates of bronze, and also, as we afterwards learnt, it was possible to let down a portion

of the roadways themselves by withdrawing certain bolts, and thus render it almost impossible for an enemy to pass. The third entrance consisted of a flight of ten curved black marble steps leading to a doorway cut in the palace wall. This wall was in itself a work of art, being built of huge blocks of granite to the height of forty feet, and so fashioned that its face was concave, whereby it was rendered practically impossible for it to be scaled. To this doorway our guide led us. The door, which was very massive, and made of wood protected by an outer gate of bronze, was closed; but on our approach it was thrown wide, and we were met by the challenge of a sentry, who was armed with a heavy triangular-bladed spear, not unlike a bayonet in shape, and a cutting sword, and protected by breast and back plates of skilfully prepared hippopotamus-hide, and a small round shield fashioned of the same tough material. The sword instantly attracted our attention; it was practically identical with the one in the possession of Mr. Mackenzie which he had obtained from the ill-starred wanderer. There was no mistaking the gold-lined fretwork cut in the thickness of the blade. So the man had told the truth after all. Our guide instantly gave a password, which the soldier acknowledged by letting the iron shaft of his spear fall with a ringing sound upon the pavement, and we passed on through the massive wall into the courtyard of the palace. This was about forty yards square, and laid out in flower-beds full of lovely shrubs and plants, many of which were quite new to me. Through the centre of this garden ran a broad walk formed of powdered shells brought from the lake in the place of gravel. Following this we came to another doorway with a round heavy arch, which is hung with thick curtains, for there are no doors in the palace itself. Then came another short passage, and we were in the great hall of the palace, and once more stood astonished at the simple and yet overpowering grandeur of the place.

The hall is, as we afterwards learnt, one hundred and ten feet long by eighty wide, and has a magnificent arched roof of carved wood. Down the entire length of the building there are on either side, and at a distance of twenty feet from the wall, slender shafts of black marble springing sheer to the roof, beautifully fluted, and with carved capitals. At one end of this great place which these pillars supported is the group of which I have already spoken as executed by the King Rademas to commemorate his building of the staircase; and really, when we had time to admire it, its loveliness almost struck us dumb. The group, of which the figures

are in white, and the couch in black marble, is about half as large again as life, and represents a young man of noble countenance and form sleeping heavily upon a couch. One arm is carelessly thrown over the side of this couch, and his head reposes upon the other, its curling locks partially hiding it. Bending over him, her hand resting on his forehead, is a draped female form of such white loveliness as to make the beholder's breath stand still. And as for the calm glory that shines upon her perfect face—well, I can never hope to describe it. But there it rests like the shadow of an angel's smile; and power, love, and divinity all have their part in it. Her eyes are fixed upon the sleeping youth, and perhaps the most extraordinary thing about this beautiful work is the success with which the artist has succeeded in depicting on the sleeper's worn and weary face the sudden rising of a new and spiritual thought as the spell begins to work within his mind. You can see that an inspiration is breaking in upon the darkness of the man's soul as the dawn breaks in upon the darkness of the night. It is a glorious piece of statuary, and none but a genius could have conceived it. Between each of the black marble columns is some such group of figures, some allegorical, and some representing the persons and wives of deceased monarchs or great men; but none of them, in our opinion, comes up to the one I have described, although several are from the hand of the great sculptor and engineer, King Rademas.

In the exact centre of the hall was a solid mass of black marble about the size of a baby's arm-chair, which it rather resembled in appearance. This, as we afterwards learnt, was the sacred stone of this remarkable people, and on it their monarchs laid their hand after the ceremony of coronation, and swore by the sun to safeguard the interests of the empire, and to maintain its customs, traditions, and laws. This stone was evidently exceedingly ancient (as indeed all stones are), and was scored down its sides with long marks or lines, which Sir Henry said proved it to have been a fragment that at some remote period in its history had been ground in the iron jaws of glaciers. There was a curious prophecy about this block of marble, which was reported among the people to have fallen from the sun, to the effect that when it was shattered into fragments a king of alien race should rule over the land. As the stone, however, looked remarkably solid, the native princes seemed to have a fair chance of keeping their own for many a long year.

At the end of the hall is a daïs spread with rich carpets, on

which two thrones are set side by side. These thrones are shaped like great chairs, and are made of solid gold. The seats are richly cushioned, but the backs are left bare, and on each is carved the emblem of the sun, shooting out his fiery rays in all directions. The footstools are golden lions couchant, with yellow topazes set in them for eyes. There are no other gems about them.

The place is lighted by numerous but narrow windows, placed high up, cut on the principle of the loopholes to be seen in ancient castles, but innocent of glass, which was evidently unknown here.

Such is a brief description of this splendid hall in which we now found ourselves, compiled of course from our subsequent knowledge of it. On this occasion we had but little time for observation, for when we entered we perceived that a large number of men were gathered together in front of the two thrones, which were unoccupied. The principal among them were seated on carved wooden chairs ranged to the right and the left of the thrones, but not in front of them, and were dressed in white tunics, with various embroideries and different coloured edgings, and armed with the usual pierced and gold-inlaid swords. To judge from the dignity of their appearance, they seemed one and all to be individuals of very great importance. Behind each of these great men was a small knot of followers and attendants.

Seated by themselves, in a little group to the left of the throne, were six men of a different stamp. Instead of wearing the ordinary kilt they were clothed in long robes of pure white linen, with the same symbol of the sun that is to be seen on the back of the chairs, emblazoned in gold thread upon the breast. This garment was girt up at the waist with a simple golden curb-like chain, from which hung long elliptic plates of the same metal, fashioned in shiny scales like those of a fish, that, as their wearers moved, jingled and reflected the light. They were all men of mature age and of a severe and impressive cast of features, which was rendered still more imposing by the long beards they wore.

The personality of one individual among them, however, impressed us at once. He seemed to stand out among his fellows and refuse to be overlooked. He was very old—eighty at least—and extremely tall, with a long snow-white beard that hung nearly to his waist. His features were aquiline and deeply cut, and his eyes were grey and cold-looking. The heads of the others were bare, but this man wore a sort of round cap entirely covered with gold embroidery, from which we judged that he was a person of great

importance; and indeed it afterwards transpired that he was Agon, the High Priest of the country. As we approached, all these men, including the priests, rose and bowed to us with the greatest courtesy, at the same time placing the two fingers across the lips in salutation. Then soft-footed attendants advanced from between the pillars, bearing seats, which were placed in a line in front of the thrones. We three sat down, Alphonse and Umslopogaas standing behind us. Scarcely had we done so when there came a blare of trumpets from some passage to the right, and a similar blare from the left. Next a man with a long white wand of ivory appeared just in front of the right-hand throne, and cried out something in a loud voice, ending with the word *Nyleptha*, repeated three times; and another man, similarly attired, called out a similar sentence before the other throne, but ending with the word *Sorais*, also repeated thrice. Then came the tramp of armed men from each side entrance, and in filed about a score of picked and magnificently accoutred guards, who formed up on each side of the thrones, and let their heavy iron-handled spears fall simultaneously with a clash upon the black marble flooring. Another double blare of trumpets, and in from either side, each attended by six maidens, swept the two Queens of Zu-vendis, everybody in the hall rising to greet them as they came.

I have seen beautiful women in my day, and am no longer thrown into transports at the sight of a pretty face; but language fails me when I try to give some idea of the blaze of loveliness that then broke upon us in the persons of these sister Queens. Both were young—perhaps five-and-twenty years of age—tall and exquisitely formed; but there the likeness stopped. One, Nyleptha, was a woman of dazzling fairness; her right arm and breast bare, after the custom of her people, showed like snow even against her white and gold-embroidered 'kaf,' or toga. And as for her sweet face, all I can say is, that it was one that few men could look on and forget. Her hair, a veritable crown of gold, clustered in short ringlets over her shapely head, half hiding the ivory brow, beneath which eyes of deep and glorious grey flashed out in tender majesty. I cannot attempt to describe her other features, only the mouth was most sweet, and curved like Cupid's bow, and over the whole countenance there shone an indescribable look of lovingkindness, lit up by a shadow of delicate humour that lay upon her face like a touch of silver on a rosy cloud.

She wore no jewels, but on her neck, arm, and knee were the usual torques of gold, in this instance fashioned like a snake; and

her dress was of pure white linen of excessive fineness, plentifully embroidered with gold and with the familiar symbols of the sun.

Her twin sister, Sorais, was of a different and darker type of beauty. Her hair was wavy like Nyleptha's but coal-black, and fell in masses on her shoulders; her complexion was olive, her eyes large, dark, and lustrous; the lips were full, and I thought rather cruel. Somehow her face, quiet and even cold as it was, gave an idea of passion in repose, and caused one to wonder involuntarily what its aspect would be if anything occurred to break the calm. It reminded me of the deep sea, that even on the bluest days never loses its visible stamp of power, and in its murmuring sleep is yet instinct with the spirit of the storm. Her figure, like her sister's, was almost perfect in its curves and outlines, but a trifle more rounded, and her dress was absolutely the same.

As this lovely pair swept onwards to their respective thrones amid the deep attentive silence of the Court, I was bound to confess to myself that they did indeed fulfil my idea of royalty. Royal they were in every way—in form, in grace, and queenly dignity, and in the barbaric splendour of their attendant pomp. But methought that they needed no guards or gold to proclaim their power and bind the loyalty of wayward men. A glance from those bright eyes or a smile from those sweet lips, and while the red blood runs in the veins of youth women such as these will never lack subjects ready to do their biddings to the death.

But after all they were women first and queens afterwards, and therefore not devoid of curiosity. As they passed to their seats I saw both of them glance swiftly in our direction. I saw, too, that their eyes passed by me, seeing nothing to charm them in the person of an insignificant and grizzled old man. Then they looked with evident astonishment on the grim form of old Umslopogaas, who raised his axe in salutation. Attracted next by the splendour of Good's apparel, for a second their glance rested on him like a humming moth upon a flower, then off it darted to where Sir Henry Curtis stood, the sunlight from a window playing upon his yellow hair and peaked beard, and marking out the outlines of his massive frame against the twilight of the somewhat gloomy hall. He raised his eyes, and they met the fair Nyleptha's full, and thus for the first time the goodliest man and woman that it has ever been my lot to see looked one upon another. And why it was I know not, but I saw the swift blood run up beneath Nyleptha's skin as the pink lights run up the morning sky. Red grew her

air bosom and shapely arm, red the swanlike neck; the rounded cheeks blushed red as the petals of a rose, and then the crimson blood sank back to whence it came and left her pale and trembling.

I glanced at Sir Henry. He, too, had coloured up to the eyes.

'Oh, my word!' thought I to myself, 'the ladies have come on the stage, and now we may look to the plot to develop itself.' And I sighed and shook my head, knowing that the beauty of a woman is like the beauty of the lightning—a destructive thing and a cause of desolation. By the time that I had finished my reflections both the Queens were on the thrones, for all this had happened in about four seconds. Once more the unseen trumpets blared out, and then the Court seated itself, and Queen Sorais motioned to us to do likewise.

Next from among the crowd whither he had withdrawn stepped forward our guide, the old gentleman who had towed us ashore, holding by the hand the girl whom we had seen first and afterwards rescued from the hippopotamus. Having made obeisance he proceeded to address the Queens, evidently describing to them the way and place where we had been found. It was most amusing to watch the astonishment, not unmixed with fear, reflected upon their faces as they listened to his tale. Clearly they could not understand how we had reached the lake, and been found floating on it, and were inclined to attribute our presence to supernatural causes. Then the narrative proceeded, as I judged from the frequent appeals that our guide made to the girl, to the point where we had shot the hippopotami, and we at once perceived that there was something very wrong about those hippopotami, for the history was frequently interrupted by indignant exclamations from the little group of white-robed priests and even from the courtiers, while the two Queens listened with an amazed expression, especially when our guide pointed to the rifles in our hands as being the means of destruction. And here, to make matters clear, I may as well explain at once that the inhabitants of Zu-vendis are sun-worshippers, and that for some reason or other the hippopotamus is a sacred animal among them. Not that they do not kill it, because at certain seasons of the year they slaughter thousands—which are specially preserved in large lakes up the country—and use their hides for armour for soldiers, but this does not prevent them from considering these animals as sacred to the sun. Now, as ill luck would have it, the particular hippopotami we had shot were a family of tame animals that were kept at the mouth of the port and daily fed by priests whose special duty it was

to attend to them. When we shot them I thought that the bu were suspiciously tame, and this was, as we afterwards ascertai the cause of it. Thus it came about that in attempting to sl off we had committed sacrilege of a most aggravated nature.

When our guide had finished his tale, the old man with long beard and round cap, whose appearance I have alre described, and who was, as I have said, the High Priest the country, and known by the name of Agon, rose and co menced an impassioned harangue. I did not like the look of cold grey eye as he fixed it on us. I should have liked it still le had I known that in the name of the outraged majesty of his g he was demanding that the whole lot of us should be offered up a sacrifice by means of being burnt alive.

After he had finished speaking the Queen Sorais addres him in a soft and musical voice, and appeared, to judge from gestures of dissent, to be putting the other side of the questi before him. Then Nyleptha spoke in liquid accents. Little d we know that she was pleading for our lives. Finally, she turne and addressed a tall, soldierlike man of middle age with a bla beard and a long plain sword, whose name, as we afterwar learnt, was Nasta, and who was the greatest lord in the country; apparently appealing to him for support. Now when Sir Henry had caught her eye and she had blushed so rosy red, I had seen that the incident had not escaped this man's notice, and what is more, that it was eminently disagreeable to him, for he bit his lip and his hand tightened on his sword-hilt. Afterwards we learnt that he was an aspirant for the hand of this Queen in marriage, which accounted for it. This being so, Nyleptha could not have appealed to a worse person, for, speaking in slow, heavy tones, he appeared to confirm all that the High Priest Agon said. As he spoke, Sorais put her elbow on her knee, and, resting her chin on her hand, looked at him with a suppressed smile upon her lips, as though she saw through the man, and was determined to be his match; but Nyleptha grew very angry. Her cheek flushed, her eyes flashed, and she did indeed look lovely. Finally she turned to Agon and seemed to give some sort of qualified assent, for he bowed at her words; and as she spoke she moved her hands as though to emphasise her words; whilst all the time Sorais kept her chin on her hand and smiled. Then suddenly Nyleptha made a sign, and the trumpets blew again, and everybody rose to leave the hall save ourselves and the guards, whom she motioned to stay.

When they were all gone she bent forward and, smiling sweetly, partially by signs and partially by exclamations made it clear to us that she was very anxious to know where we came from. The difficulty was how to explain, but at last an idea struck me. I had my large pocket-book in my pocket and a pencil. Taking it out, I made a little sketch of a lake, and then as best I could drew the underground river and the lake at the other end. When I had done this I advanced to the steps of the throne and gave it to her. She understood it at once and clapped her hands with delight, and then descending from the throne took it to her sister Sorais, who also evidently understood. Next she took the pencil from me, and after examining it with curiosity proceeded to make a series of delightful little sketches, the first representing herself holding out both hands in welcome, and a man uncommonly like Sir Henry taking them. Next she drew a lovely little picture of a hippopotamus rolling about dying in the water, and of an individual, in whom we had no difficulty in recognising Agon the High Priest, holding up his hands in horror on the bank. Then followed a most alarming picture of a dreadful fiery furnace and of the same figure, Agon, poking us into it with a forked stick. This picture perfectly horrified me, but I was a little reassured when she nodded sweetly and proceeded to make a fourth drawing—of a man again uncommonly like Sir Henry, and of two women, in whom I recognised Sorais and herself, each with one arm around him, and holding a sword in protection over him. To all of these Sorais, who I saw was employed in carefully taking us all in—especially Curtis—signified her approval by nodding.

At last Nyleptha drew a final sketch of a rising sun, indicating that she must go, and that we should meet on the following morning; whereat Sir Henry looked so disappointed that she saw it, and, I suppose by way of consolation, extended her hand to him to kiss, which he did with pious fervour. At the same time Sorais, off whom Good had never taken his eyeglass during the whole indaba [interview], rewarded him by giving him her hand to kiss, though, while she did so, her eyes were fixed upon Sir Henry. I am glad to say that I was not implicated in these proceedings; neither of them gave me her hand to kiss.

Then Nyleptha turned and addressed the man who appeared to be in command of the bodyguard, apparently from her manner and his frequent obeisances, giving him very stringent and careful orders; after which, with a somewhat coquettish nod and

smile, she left the hall, followed by Sorais and most of the guards.

When the Queens had gone, the officer whom Nyleptha had addressed came forward and with many tokens of deep respect led us from the hall through various passages to a sumptuous set of apartments opening out of a large central room lighted with brazen swinging lamps (for it was now dusk) and richly carpeted and strewn with couches. On a table in the centre of the room was set a profusion of food and fruit, and, what is more, flowers. There was delicious wine also in ancient-looking sealed earthenware flagons, and beautifully chased golden and ivory cups to drink it from. Servants, male and female, also were there to minister to us, and whilst we ate, from some recess outside the apartment

> The silver lute did speak between
> The trumpet's lordly blowing;

and altogether we found ourselves in a sort of earthly paradise which was only disturbed by the vision of that disgusting High Priest who intended to commit us to the flames. But so very weary were we with our labours that we could scarcely keep ourselves awake through the sumptuous meal, and as soon as it was over we indicated that we desired to sleep. So they led us off, and would have given us a room each, but we made it clear that we would sleep two in a room. As a further precaution against surprise we left Umslopogaas with his axe to sleep in the main chamber near the curtained doorways leading to the apartments which we occupied respectively, Good and I in the one, and Sir Henry and Alphonse in the other. Then throwing off our clothes, with the exception of the mail shirts, which we considered it safer to keep on, we flung ourselves down upon the low and luxurious couches, and drew the silk-embroidered coverlids over us.

In two minutes I was just dropping off when I was aroused by Good's voice.

'I say, Quatermain,' he said, 'did you ever see such eyes?'

'Eyes!' I said, crossly; 'what eyes?'

'Why, the Queen's, of course! Sorais, I mean—at least I think that is her name.'

'Oh, I don't know,' I yawned; 'I didn't notice them much; I suppose they are good eyes,' and again I dropped off.

Five minutes or so elapsed, and I was once more awakened.

'I say, Quatermain,' said the voice.

'Well,' I answered testily, 'what is it now?'

'Did ye notice her ankle? The shape——'

This was more than I could stand. By my bed stood the ldtschoons I had been wearing. Moved quite beyond myself I ok them up and threw them straight at Good's head—and it it.

After that I slept the sleep of the just, and a very heavy sleep must be. As for Good, I don't know if he went to sleep or if e continued to pass Sorais' beauties in mental review, and, what s more, I don't care.

(*To be continued.*)

Pastoral.

TO leave home in early life is to be stunned and quicken with novelties; but when years have come, it only cast more endearing light upon the past. As in those composite photographs of Mr. Galton's, the image of each new sitter becomes out but the more clearly the central features of the race; when once youth has flown, each new impression only deepens the sense of nationality and the desire of native places. So may a cadet of Royal Écossais or the Albany Regiment, as he mounts guard about French citadels, so may some officer marching in company of the Scots-Dutch among the polders, have felt the soft rains of the Hebrides upon his brow, or started in the ranks at the remembered aroma of peat smoke. And the rivers of home are dear in particular to all men. This is as old as Naaman, who was jealous for Abana and Pharpar; it is confined to no race or country, for I know one of Scottish blood but a child of Suffolk, whose fancy still lingers about the lilied lowland waters of that shire. But the streams of Scotland are incomparable in themselves—or I am only the more Scottish to suppose so—and their sound and colour dwell for ever in the memory. How often and willingly do I not look again in fancy on Tummel, or Manor, or the talking Airdle, or Dee swirling in its Lynn; on the bright burn of Kinnaird, or the golden burn that pours and sulks in the den behind Kingussie! I think shame to leave out one of these enchantresses, but the list would grow too long if I remembered all; only I may not forget Allan Water, nor birch-wetting Rogie, nor yet Almond; nor, for all its pollutions, that water of Leith of the many and well-named mills—Bell's Mills, and Cannon Mills, and Silver Mills; nor Redford Burn of pleasant memories; nor yet, for all its smallness, that nameless trickle that springs in the green bosom of Allermuir, and is fed from Halkerside with a perennial teacupful, and threads the moss under the Shearer's Knowe, and makes one pool there, overhung by a rock, where I

loved to sit and make bad verses, and is then kidnapped in its infancy by subterranean pipes for the service of the sea-beholding city in the plain. From many points in the moss you may see at one glance its whole course and that of all its tributaries; the geographer of this Lilliput may visit all its corners without sitting down, and not yet begin to be breathed; Shearer's Knowe and Halkerside are but names of adjacent cantons on a single shoulder of a hill, as names are squandered (it would seem to the inexpert, in superfluity) upon these upland sheepwalks; a bucket would receive the whole discharge of the toy river; it would take it an appreciable time to fill your morning bath; for the most part, besides, it soaks unseen through the moss; and yet for the sake of auld lang syne, and the figure of a certain *genius loci*, I am condemned to linger awhile in fancy by its shores; and if the nymph (who cannot be above a span in stature) will but inspire my pen, I would gladly carry the reader along with me.

John Todd, when I knew him, was already 'the oldest herd on the Pentlands,' and had been all his days faithful to that curlew-scattering, sheep-collecting life. He remembered the droving days, when the drove roads, that now lie green and solitary through the heather, were thronged thoroughfares. He had himself often marched flocks into England, sleeping on the hill-sides with his caravan; and by his account it was a rough business not without danger. The drove roads lay apart from habitation; the drovers met in the wilderness, as to-day the deep-sea fishers meet off the banks in the solitude of the Atlantic, and in the one as in the other case rough habits and fist-law were the rule. Crimes were committed, sheep filched, and drovers robbed and beaten; most of which offences had a moorland burial and were never heard of in the courts of justice. John, in those days, was at least once attacked—by two men after his watch—and at least once, betrayed by his habitual anger, fell under the danger of the law and was clapped into some rustic prison-house, the doors of which he burst in the night and was no more heard of in that quarter. When I knew him, his life had fallen in quieter places, and he had no cares beyond the dulness of his dogs and the inroads of pedestrians from town. But for a man of his propensity to wrath, these were enough; he knew neither rest nor peace, except by snatches; in the grey of the summer morning, and already from far up the hill, he would wake the 'toun' with the sound of his shoutings; and in the lambing time, his cries were not yet silenced late at night. This wrathful voice of a man

unseen might be said to haunt that quarter of the Pentlands, audible bogie; and no doubt it added to the fear in which stood of John a touch of something legendary. For my part, he was at first my enemy, and I, in my character rambling boy, his natural abhorrence. It was long before I him near at hand, knowing him only by some sudden blast of lowing from far above, bidding me 'c'way oot amang the shee The quietest recesses of the hill harboured this ogre; I skul in my favourite wilderness like a Cameronian of the Killing Tr and John Todd was my Claverhouse, and his dogs my questi dragoons. Little by little, we dropped into civilities; his hai sight of me began to have less of the ring of a war-slogan; so we never met but he produced his snuff-box, which was with hi like the red-indian's calumet, a part of the heraldry of pea and at length, in the ripeness of time, we grew to be a pair friends, and when I lived alone in these parts in the winter, was a settled thing for John to 'give me a cry' over the gard wall as he set forth upon his evening round, and for me overtake and bear him company.

That dread voice of his that shook the hills when he w angry, fell in ordinary talk very pleasantly upon the ear, with kind of honied, friendly whine, not far off singing, that w eminently Scottish. He laughed not very often, and when he did, with a sudden, loud haw-haw, hearty but somehow joyless like an echo from a rock. His face was permanently set and coloured; ruddy and stiff with weathering; more like a picture than a face; yet with a certain strain and a threat of latent anger in the expression, like that of a man trained too fine and harassed with perpetual vigilance. He spoke in the richest dialect of Scotch I ever heard; the words in themselves were a pleasure and often a surprise to me, so that I often came back from one of our patrols with new acquisitions; and this vocabulary he would handle like a master, stalking a little before me, 'beard on shoulder,' the plaid hanging loosely about him, the yellow staff clapped under his arm, and guiding me uphill by that devious, tactical ascent which seems peculiar to men of his trade. I might count him with the best talkers; only that talking Scots and talking English seem incomparable acts. He touched on nothing at least, but he adorned it; when he narrated, the scene was before you; when he spoke (as he did mostly) of his own antique business, the thing took on a colour of romance and curiosity that was surprising. The clans of sheep with their particular territories

on the hill, and how, in the yearly killings and purchases, each must be proportionally thinned and strengthened; the midnight busyness of animals, the signs of the weather, the cares of the snowy season, the exquisite stupidity of sheep, the exquisite cunning of dogs: all these he could present so humanly, and with so much old experience and living gusto, that weariness was excluded. And in the midst, he would suddenly straighten his bowed back, the stick would fly abroad in demonstration, and the sharp thunder of his voice roll out a long itinerary for the dogs, so that you saw at last the use of that great wealth of names for every knowe and howe upon the hillside; and the dogs, having hearkened with lowered tails and raised faces, would run up their flags again to the masthead and spread themselves upon the indicated circuit. It used to fill me with wonder how they could follow and retain so long a story; but John denied these creatures all intelligence; they were the constant butt of his passion and contempt; it was just possible to work with the like of them, he said; not more than possible. And then he would expand upon the subject of the really good dogs that he had known and the one really good dog that he had himself possessed. He had been offered forty pounds for it; but a good collie was worth more than that, more than anything, to a 'herd;' he did the herd's work for him. 'As for the like of them!' he would cry, and scornfully indicate the scouring tails of his assistants.

Once—I translate John's Lallan, for I cannot do it justice, being born 'Britannis in montibus,' indeed, but alas! 'inerudito sæculo'—once, in the days of his good dog, he had bought some sheep in Edinburgh, and on the way out, the road being crowded, two were lost. This was a reproach to John and a slur upon the dog; and both were alive to their misfortune. Word came, after some days, that a farmer about Braid had found a pair of sheep; and thither went John and the dog to ask for restitution. But the farmer was a hard man and stood upon his rights. 'How were they marked?' he asked; and since John had bought right and left from many sellers and had no notion of the marks—'Very well,' said the farmer, 'then it's only right that I should keep them.' 'Well,' said John, 'it's a fact that I cannae tell the sheep; but if my dog can, will ye let me have them?' The farmer was honest as well as hard, and besides I dare say he had little fear of the ordeal; so he had all the sheep upon his farm into one large park, and turned John's dog into

their midst. That hairy man of business knew his errand well; he knew that John and he had bought two sheep and (to their shame) lost them about Boroughmuirhead; he knew besides (the Lord knows how, unless by listening) that they were come to Braid for their recovery; and without pause or blunder, singled out, first one and then another, the two waifs. It was that afternoon the forty pounds were offered and refused; and the shepherd and his dog—what do I say? the true shepherd and his man—set off together by Fairmilehead in jocund humour, and 'smiled to ither' all the way home, with the two recovered ones before them. So far, so good; but intelligence may be abused; the dog, as he is by little man's inferior in mind, is only by little his superior in virtue; and John had another collie tale of quite a different complexion. At the foot of the moss behind Kirk Yetton (Caer Ketton, wise men say) there is a scrog of low wood and a pool with a dam for washing sheep. John was one day lying under a bush in the scrog, when he was aware of a collie on the far hillside, skulking down through the deepest of the heather with obtrusive stealth. He knew the dog; knew him for a clever, rising practitioner from quite a distant farm; one whom perhaps he had coveted as he saw him masterfully steering flocks to market. But what did the practitioner so far from home? and why this guilty and secret manœuvring towards the pool?—for it was towards the pool that he was heading. John lay the closer under his bush; and presently saw the dog come forth upon the margin, look all about to see if he were anywhere observed, plunge in and repeatedly wash himself over head and ears, and then (but now openly and with tail in air) strike homeward over the hills. That same night, word was sent his master, and the rising practitioner, shaken up from where he lay, all innocence, before the fire, was had out to a dykeside and promptly shot; for alas! he was that foulest of criminals under trust, a sheep-eater; and it was from the maculation of sheep's blood that he had come so far to cleanse himself in the pool behind Kirk Yetton.

A trade that touches nature, one that lies at the foundations of life, in which we have all had ancestors employed, so that on a hint of it ancestral memories revive, lends itself to literary use, vocal or written. The fortune of a tale lies not alone in the skill of him that writes, but as much, perhaps, in the inherited experience of him who reads; and when I hear with a particular thrill of things that I have never done or seen, it is one of that innumerable army of my ancestors rejoicing in past deeds. Thus

novels begin to touch not the fine *dilettanti* but the gross mass of mankind, when they leave off to speak of parlours and shades of manner and still-born niceties of motive, and begin to deal with fighting, sailoring, adventure, death or childbirth; and thus ancient outdoor crafts and occupations, whether Mr. Hardy wields the shepherd's crook or Count Tolstoi swings the scythe, lift romance into a near neighbourhood with epic. These aged things have on them the dew of man's morning; they lie near, not so much to us, the semi-artificial flowerets, as to the trunk and aboriginal taproot of the race. A thousand interests spring up in the process of the ages, and a thousand perish; that is now an eccentricity or a lost art, which was once the fashion of an empire; and those only are perennial matters that rouse us to-day, and that roused men in all epochs of the past. There is a certain critic, not indeed of execution but of matter, whom I dare be known to set before the best: a certain low-browed, hairy gentleman, at first a percher in the fork of trees, next (as they relate) a dweller in caves, and whom I think I see squatting in cave-mouths, of a pleasant afternoon, to munch his berries—his wife, that accomplished lady, squatting by his side: his name I never heard, but he is often described as Probably Arboreal, which may serve for recognition. Each has his own tree of ancestors, but at the top of all sits Probably Arboreal; in all our veins there run some minims of his old, wild, tree-top blood; our civilised nerves still tingle with his rude terrors and pleasures; and to that which would have moved our common ancestor, all must obediently thrill.

We have not so far to climb to come to shepherds; and it may be I had one for an ascendant who has largely moulded me. But yet I think I owe my taste for that hillside business rather to the art and interest of John Todd. He it was that made it live for me, as the artist can make all things live. It was through him the simple strategy of massing sheep upon a snowy evening, with its attendant scampering of earnest, shaggy aides-de-camp, was an affair that I never wearied of seeing, and that I never weary of recalling to mind: the shadow of the night darkening on the hills, inscrutable black blots of snow shower moving here and there like night already come, huddles of yellow sheep and dartings of black dogs upon the snow, a bitter air that took you by the throat, unearthly harpings of the wind along the moors; and for centre piece to all these features and influences, John winding up the brae, keeping his captain's eye upon all sides and breaking,

ever and again, into a spasm of bellowing that seemed to m the evening bleaker. It is thus that I still see him in my mi eye, perched on a hump of the declivity not far from Halkers his staff in airy flourish, his great voice taking hold upon the and echoing terror to the lowlands; I, meanwhile, standing so what back, until the fit should be over, and, with a pinch of sn my friend relapse into his easy, even conversation.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

The Ballad of Ferencz Renyi.

HUNGARY, 1848.

THIS is the story of Renyi,
And when you have heard it through,
Pray God He send no trial like his
To try the faith of you !

And if his doom be upon you,
Then may God grant you this:
To fight as good a fight as he,
And win a crown like his !

He was strong and handsome and happy,
Beloved and loving and young,
With eyes that men set their trust in,
And the fire of his soul on his tongue.

He loved the Spirit of Freedom
He hated his country's wrongs,
He told the patriots' stories,
And he sang the patriots' songs.

With mother and sister and sweetheart
His safe glad days went by,
Till Hungary called on her children
To arm, to fight, and to die.

'Good-bye to mother and sister;
Good-bye to my sweet sweetheart;
I fight for you—you pray for me,
We shall not be apart!'

The women prayed at the sunrise,
They prayed when the skies grew dim;
His mother and sister prayed for the Cause,
His sweetheart prayed for him.

For mother and sister and sweetheart,
  But most for the true and the right,
He low laid down his own life's hopes
  And led his men to fight.

Skirmishing, scouting, and spying,
  Night-watch, attack, and defeat;
The resolute, desperate fighting,
  The hopeless, reluctant retreat;

Ruin, defeat, and disaster,
  Capture and loss and despair,
And half of his regiment hidden,
  And only this man knew where!

Prisoner, fast bound, sore wounded,
  They brought him roughly along,
With his body as weak and broken
  As his spirit was steadfast and strong.

Before the Austrian general—
  'Where are your men?' he heard;
He looked black death in its ugly face
  And answered never a word.

'Where is your regiment hidden?
  Speak—you are pardoned straight—
No? We can find dumb dogs their tongues,
  You rebel reprobate!'

They dragged his mother and sister
  Into the open hall.
'Give up your men, if these women
  Are dear to your heart at all!'

He turned his eyes on his sister,
  And spoke to her silently;
She answered his silence with speaking,
  And straight from the heart spoke she.

'If you betray your country
  You spit on our father's name:
And what is life without honour?
  And what is death without shame?'

He looked on the mother who bore him,
  And her smile was splendid to see;
He hid his face with a bitter cry,
  But never a word said he.

'Son of my body—be silent!
  My days at the best are few,
And I shall know how to give them,
  Son of my heart, for you!'

He shivered, set teeth, kept silence:
  With never a plaint or cry
The women were slain before him,
  And he stood and saw them die.

Then they brought his lovely beloved,
  Desire of his heart and eyes.
'Say where your men are hidden,
  Or say that your sweetheart dies.'

She threw her arms about him,
  She laid her lips to his cheek:
'Speak! for my sake who love you!
  Love, for our love's sake, speak!'

His eyes are burning and shining
  With the fire of immortal disgrace—
God—walk with him in the furnace
  And strengthen his soul for a space!

Long he looked at his sweetheart,
  His eyes grew tender and wet;
Closely he held her to him,
  His lips to her lips were set.

'See! I am young! I love you!
  I am not ready to die!
One word makes us happy for ever,
  Together you and I.'

Her hands round his neck were clinging,
  Her lips his cold lips caressed;
He suddenly flung her from him,
  And folded his arms on his breast.

She wept, she shrieked, she struggled,
  She cursed him in God's name,
For the woe of her early dying,
  And for her dying's shame.

And still she stood, and his silence
  Like fire was burning him through,
Then the muskets spoke once, and were silent.
  And she was silent too.

They turned to torture him further,
  If further might be—in vain;
He had held his peace in that threefold hell,
  And he never spoke again:

The end of the uttermost anguish
  A human soul could bear,
Was the madhouse where tyrants bury
  The broken shells of despair.

. . . . . .

By the heaven renounced at her altar,
  By the hell thrice braved for her sake,
By the years of madness and silence,
  By the heart that her enemies brake.

By the young life's promise ruined,
  By the years of too living death,
By the passionate self-devotion,
  And the absolute perfect faith.

By the thousands who know such anguish,
  And share such divine renown,
Who have borne them bravely in battle,
  And won the conqueror's crown.

By the torments her children have suffered,
  By the blood that her martyrs will give,
By the deaths men have died in her service,
  By these shall our Liberty live!

By the silence of tears, in the burden
  Of the wrongs we some day will repay,
Live the brothers who died in all ages
  For the Freedom we live for to-day!

E. Nesbit.

London Fogs.

IT has been remarked that if it were not for the fogs, life in London would be more enjoyable than in any other capital. Not only do fogs seriously interfere with business and pleasure in every way, but their influence on health is such that after four or five days of their persistence, coupled with severe frost, the mortality of the metropolis is occasionally more than doubled. The frost alone has some effect, but it is the fog which is most deadly.

To take an instance. Dense fog was felt in London at the end of January 1880, and the Registrar-General, in his report for the week ending February 7 of that year, says:—

'The annual death rate from all causes, which had been equal to 22·6, 27·1, and 31·3 in the three preceding weeks, further rose last week to 48·1 per thousand. The death rate last week was higher than it has been in any week since the cholera epidemics of 1849, 1854, and 1866.

'The nearest approach in recent years to so high a rate of mortality as that which prevailed in London last week was recorded in the week ending December 20, 1873, when the death rate was equal to 37·5 per thousand, influenced then, as it was last week, by low temperature and dense fogs.

'The deaths referred to diseases of the respiratory organs, which had been 559 and 757 in the two preceding weeks, further rose to 1,557 last week, and exceeded the corrected weekly average by no less than 1,118. This remarkable fatality of lung diseases was probably due to the combined effect of the cold and fog.'

On a later occasion, in the report for the week ending February 11, 1882, when mortality from all causes was 35·3 per thousand, the Registrar-General remarks:—

'No age escapes the noxious influence of these fogs, the mortality having risen on each of these three occasions (December 20, 1873, February 7, 1880, and February 11, 1882) at every

period of life; but the effect is most marked on persons advanced life, and least so on children under five years of age.

A clear statement of the influence of fog on mortality contained in one of the lectures delivered at the conferences connection with the Health Exhibition of 1884 by Dr. J. Tripe, a well-known authority on the subject:—

'Diseases of the lungs, excluding consumption, are fatal in proportion to the lowness of the temperature, and the presence excess of moisture and fog. Thus, in January 1882, the mean weekly temperature fell from 43·9° in the second week to 36·2° in the third, with fog and mist. The number of deaths registered during the third week, which may be taken as corresponding with the meteorological conditions of the second week, was 1,700, and in the next week 1,971. Unusual cold, with frequent fogs and little sunshine, continued for four weeks, the weekly number of deaths rising from 1,700 to 1,971, 2,023, 2,632, and 2,188. The deaths from acute diseases of the lungs in these weeks were respectively 279, 481, 566, 881, and 689, showing that a large proportion of the excessive mortality was caused by these diseases. At the end of November and in December of the same year there was a rapid fall of temperature, when the number of deaths from acute diseases of the lungs rose from 297 to 358, 350, 387, 541, 553, and 389 in the respective weeks. From November 29 to December 9 the sun was seen on two days only for four and a half hours, and from December 9th to the 18th, also on two other days for less than four hours, making the total amount of sunshine 8·5 hours only in twenty days. In January and February the excess of weekly mortality from all diseases reached the large number of 504 deaths; in December it was less, the fogs not having been so dense, but the excess equalled 246 deaths per week. In January 1881, there was much greater and long-continued cold, but the mortality was smaller, as there was less fog, and the oscillations of temperature were not so large.'

Our readers will, therefore, probably admit that it is worth while placing on record what is known about fogs; what are the conditions which give rise to them, and what are the prospects, if any, of obtaining relief from them.

As regards the nature of fogs, the first step in the conversion of aqueous vapour into rain is the production of extremely small droplets, the form in which water is present in fog or cloud, or in the steam-cloud from a locomotive.

We know that aqueous vapour is as perfectly transparent as

air or water. It is only when the moisture is disseminated through the air, not as vapour, but as liquid in a state of minute subdivision, that the mixture becomes opaque, just as a transparent sheet of glass, when pounded up, becomes an opaque white powder, owing to the intermixture of particles of air and glass, with their very different refracting powers.

Fogs are frequently caused by the intermixture of masses of air of very different temperatures. If the mixture of two masses of air has a temperature lower than is requisite to maintain, in the state of vapour, the total quantity of moisture contained in the aggregate volume of air, a portion is, so to speak, precipitated, in the form of minute drops of water, as already explained.

Fogs are, however, generated by the cooling of masses of air in other ways than by mixture. If a warm damp current of air flows over a chilled surface, such as that of an ice-floe, or a cold ocean current, a fog is the result, and the density of the fogs on the Banks of Newfoundland is well known. There they are often as sharply defined in outline as the hardest-looking woolpack clouds. It is not an uncommon phenomenon, when a fog-bank is lying off the harbour of St. John's, for the bowsprit of a ship to be seen emerging from the fog, while not a trace of the masts or hull is perceptible, and again at times the topmasts will be in bright sunshine while the crew cannot see from stem to stern on deck. In a similar way, cold rivers, such as those which flow down from glaciers and pass through the warmer air lying over the open country, produce dense fogs.

A converse cause of the production of fogs is the sudden chilling of saturated air lying over a warm water surface. This is the origin of the fogs which form over running streams in this country in time of frost: the water, being warmer than the air, gives off vapour in greater quantity than the air at its low temperature can contain, and the surplus amount is precipitated as fog.

A class of fogs, termed by Herschel 'radiation fogs,' are formed in valleys or over damp meadows in the evenings. The surface of the ground is cooled by radiation below the dew-point, and the moisture rising from the earth is condensed and forms fog. We often see such fogs over low grassy bottoms, or filling valleys to a certain height, with a surface as level as a lake.

These fogs are produced by moisture rising into cold air, and they disappear after sunrise, as soon as the heat is sufficient to enable the air to take up all the moisture which is present.

As regards the condensation of fog on dust-particles, Mr.

John Aitken has at various times laid before the Royal Society of Edinburgh the results of certain investigations, in which he arrives at the following conclusions:—

'Vapour must have some solid or liquid body on which to condense, and the dust-particles form the nuclei required. When there is much dust in the air, but little vapour condenses on each particle, and they become but little heavier and easily float in the air. If there are few dust-specks, each gets more vapour, is heavier, and falls more quickly. If there were no dust in the air, there would be no mists or clouds, and the supersaturated air would condense on objects on the earth's surface. The active nuclei of fog and cloud particles are not the motes seen in a sunbeam, but those which are smaller and invisible. The large motes may be active nuclei, but their number is too small to have any important effect.

'The products of combustion of gas and fires have great fog-producing power. Smoke descends during a fog because the smoke-particles are good radiators and soon get cooled, and form nuclei on which the water-vapour condenses. Falling smoke indicates a saturated condition of the air, and consequent probability of rain.'

This mention of falling smoke brings us to one of the most unpleasant features of London fogs. Not only is soot deposited copiously on all objects exposed to them, but occasionally one gets a whiff of air which is all but irrespirable, from the presence in it of sulphurous acid and other products of combustion of impure coal.

The fact of the impurity of fog air has been clearly demonstrated by a series of experiments carried on for the Meteorological Council, in the laboratory of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, by Dr. W. J. Russell. We take from the Report of the Meteorological Office for 1883 the following summary of the results:—

'The determinations are divided into two series; one gives the amount of carbonic acid taken at regular intervals, irrespective of weather, and the other gives the amount when fog or mist is present. The average amount present in the air of the City is slightly below four parts in 10,000 of air, and this is shown to be rather less than that which has been found in the air of the few other towns which have been examined. Taking the most recent experiments on the composition of purely country air as indicating that the amount of carbonic acid is as low as three parts in 10,000, even then it seems that in the heart

of London the average increase is not considerable. Further, the individual analyses show that the amount of carbonic acid is often considerably below this average, usually during bright sunny days. The smallest amount of this gas found was 3·3 parts in 10,000 of air, and this was on the Bank Holiday in August 1883.

'The second series of determinations relate to the amount of carbonic acid present during a fog, and show how much this gas increases under such circumstances. The average of these experiments is 7·2. The largest amount found was 14·1, and this was during a long-continued fog in December 1882. The gradual increase of the gas on this occasion is traced.'

Another series of experiments was carried on by the same gentleman to determine the amounts of organic matter, and of sulphuric acid, present in the atmosphere under different conditions of weather. The organic matter was ascertained by determining the amounts of carbon and nitrogen respectively in grams per 1,000 cubic feet of air. The figures were as follows:—

	Carbon.	Nitrogen.	Sulphuric acid.
Fair weather . .	·0033	·0002	·0128
Dull weather . .	·0101	·0002	·0319
Foggy weather . .	·0239	·0005	·0420

This shows that there is a close relationship between the weather and the amount of impurity present in the air.

One special characteristic of foggy air is its persistence. If fog is admitted into a room by an open window, though the temperature of the room is probably above 60°, while that of the external atmosphere is close to, or even below, the freezing-point, the fog does not immediately disappear, it is not at once evaporated, though it is mixed with air at a temperature some thirty degrees higher than its own. It is a matter of every-day observation that the steam from a locomotive is not so persistent, but speedily evaporates into the surrounding air.

It is a well-known fact that in several balloon ascents in clouds and in fogs the air has been found to be far from being saturated with moisture; in fact, to be comparatively dry. This apparent paradox has been explained by Professor E. Frankland, who has shown that in certain manufactures the evaporation of a liquid is materially retarded by covering its surface with a film of coal-tar; and so, 'from our manufactories and domestic fires, vast aggregate quantities of coal-tar and paraffin are daily distilled

into the atmosphere, and, condensing upon or attaching themselves to the watery spherules of fog or cloud, must of necessity coat these latter with an oily film, which would in all probability retard the evaporation of the water, and the consequent saturation of the interstitial air.' Accordingly, the fog-spherules continue to float about in the comparatively heated air of a dwelling-house, while the steam from a boiling tea-kettle at once disappears.

Let us now consider what is known about the conditions under which fog arises. The production of sea-fogs, such as those of Newfoundland, has been already alluded to. The inland fogs of London are due to different causes. They are almost always associated with what are called anticyclonic conditions of weather. Weather is said to be anticyclonic over any district when the barometer is higher over that district than over the adjacent country. When this is the case, it is found that there is always a calm at the centre of the anticyclone, and in winter the weather is very cold. Under these circumstances the vapour rising from damp earth, and especially from water surfaces, like rivers and pools, is condensed and forms fogs. These in London and other large towns charge themselves with smoke, and give rise to the pea-soup atmosphere we enjoy so frequently.

At such times, when anticyclonic conditions exist, it is well known that the so-called inversion of temperature takes place, and the air above our heads is much warmer than that close to the ground.

In the course of the years 1873–74, a series of experiments was carried on by the staff of the Kew Observatory, on the Pagoda in Kew Gardens, to ascertain what was the influence of height on thermometer readings. The greatest elevation available on the structure was 128 feet 10 inches, and instruments were also placed at levels of 69 feet and 22 feet 6 inches above the ground. In every case, when fog was prevalent, the upper thermometers gave higher readings than the lower ones, the differences, for the difference of level of about 100 feet, from 128 feet 10 inches to 22 feet 6 inches, amounting on three separate occasions of dense fog to 4·8°, 6·0°, and 10·8° respectively.

This great difference of temperature between the upper air and the lower levels of the atmosphere in some measure accounts for the fact that, though fogs are composed of water droplets, they do not, under ordinary circumstances, give rise to rain. The

fog particles as they rise are exposed to higher and higher temperatures, and there is accordingly no tendency to further condensation. In some rare cases a fog is found to be wet; the trees drip with moisture. Under these circumstances it is always found that a thermometer lying on the grass reads higher than one at the height of 4 feet above the ground, so that the ordinary conditions of the 'grass minimum' being below the 'shade minimum' are reversed. In these cases the moisture rising from the ground is chilled as it ascends, and the chilling is carried on to perfect condensation into the form of rain.

Again in the winter of 1881, when the weather was extremely cold, and fogs were very prevalent, some balloon ascents were made near London. On one occasion, the temperature at ground-level being well below the freezing-point, the aëronauts were agreeably surprised to find a temperature of 60° when they reached a considerable elevation. On this occasion, as one of them described to the writer, they observed a river of fog lying along the Thames valley as far up as Oxford, while the rising grounds on either side of the river were quite clear.

The fog in this case had no great vertical depth; in fact, this is a well-known circumstance. We find occasionally a fog at the level of the street so dense that we are hardly able to see a few yards ahead, while we can see the sun or even the moon. In such cases high land, such as Hampstead or Highgate, is entirely free from fog.

The greatest darkness does not come from fog which is very dense at the ground-level. At times when the darkness is such that reading is impossible, except by artificial light, the gas lamps for the whole length of a street are clearly visible. As an instance of the degree of darkness which can be experienced in London at such a time, the following may be worth placing on record. One morning, at 10 A.M., a friend of the writer's, noticing that the darkness was particularly intense, put out the gas in his study, and then found that he was quite unable to distinguish a sheet of white writing-paper lying on a black table cloth. He repeated the experiment at nine o'clock the same evening; the fog had cleared off, the stars were shining, but there was no moon. The window looked on a garden, so that there was no source of light in the way of gas lamps. It was found that the white paper was distinguishable, so that the darkness at 10 A.M. was greater than in the depth of night.

Having thus described briefly some of the principal fog

phenomena, let us now say a word about its disappe
There is little to tell on this subject as regards London
their disappearance is caused by some current of air, whi
turbs the stagnant fog and dilutes it with the purer atmo
above until at length translucency is restored. As far as w
see as yet, no premonition of this desirable consumma
discoverable.

In the case of sea fogs, however, there is occasionally a
given by which their disappearance may be foreseen. Th
pearance of a whitish rainbow, without any separation o
prismatic colours, on the fog, is such a sign. These fog
are sometimes called 'fog-eaters,' a title which sufficiently
presses their character. They arise when the droplets of w
which compose the fog are excessively small—too small, in fa
give rise to a rainbow, and when the fog-bow appears, the
has already been able to penetrate the fog-atmosphere.

In conclusion, it may be asked, what chance there is
ameliorating our condition as regards fog in London. There
faint ray of hope. When the Meteorological Council was in
tuting the experiments at St. Bartholomew's Hospital Labora
of which the results have already been stated, they inqui
as a preliminary step, what records of fog prevalence exis
They were fortunate enough to find one large City firm wh
had for many years past kept a daily record of the weather, as
check on the daily fluctuation in their sales. The experience
this firm was decisive on the point, that after making allowa
for improved means of locomotion, and improved lighting of th
streets, which would afford facilities for customers to visit the
establishment, the fogs in the City were neither so dense nor
frequent as they were thirty or forty years ago.

This result must be in great measure due to the consumption
of smoke, but we are still very far from the condition as regards
smoke to which we may reasonably hope to attain. It is to the
smoke that we mainly owe the density and general obnoxiousness
of our fogs, and as long as we allow it to escape from our
chimneys, so long must we put up with all the annoyance fogs
entail.

R. H. Scott.

Clever Lady Sophia.

ABOUT three o'clock in the morning two ladies, muffled in wraps, were crossing the vestibule of a large London house, in which, as all the distracted neighbourhood knew, a ball was taking place. The elder was a somewhat insignificant-looking old woman, whose figure had lost all symmetry of outline, who was not too well dressed, and whose round face any stranger might have gazed upon without suspecting for a moment that it had once been the means of breaking the hearts of half the young men in London. That is very ancient history, remembered only by a few grey-haired old fogeys, who snigger when they think of it. Lady Sophia Wylie has broken no hearts for the last twenty or thirty years; or, if she has broken any, it has not been by her personal charms that she has effected such disasters. Her daughter, who walked behind her, was tall, slim, graceful, and so pretty as almost to deserve the epithet of beautiful. Indeed, she was frequently so described, although her celebrity may have been in some degree diminished by the fact that she was the youngest and last unmarried member of a family whose good looks had made them famous all over England. She held herself erect and carried her head high, as all her sisters do; she had the golden hair of a slightly reddish tinge, the blue eyes, the short upper lip, and the waxy complexion that they all have. Her features were, perhaps, not quite so regular as the Duchess of Grimsby's and Lady Southsea's, because a family type is apt to lose distinctness of outline by repetition; but some people thought that she had more expression than they.

Her expression at that particular moment was one of utter weariness. She had been taken to three balls that night; for weeks previous she had been going through the hard labour of a London season, and probably had not derived as much enjoyment from it as it is supposed to afford to *débutantes* in general. She looked sleepy and cross; and there is every reason to believe that her countenance faithfully reflected her sensations.

A young man who had been waiting about in the advanced, with a certain perceptible diffidence, as the emerged from the cloak-room. He was a handsome young dark-haired, broad-shouldered, apparently well-bred; but lacked that air of assurance which belongs to peers of the elder sons, bankers, brewers, and other distinguished persons. the least experienced eyes it would have been obvious that was not an eligible young man. Neither of the ladies took notice of him, although he followed them closely down the and along the strip of red carpet which crossed the pavement beneath the awning; but when the elder lady dropped her fan, darted forward with great agility, picked it up, and handed it her. 'Your fan, Lady Sophia,' said he.

Lady Sophia glanced over her shoulder and grabbed her property. 'Oh!' she returned. And without vouchsafing him further acknowledgment of his civility, she plunged, head first into her carriage.

But the younger lady paused a moment, extending her hand to the handsome youth. Her face lighted up very prettily, as she said in a voice so gentle as to be almost a whisper, 'Good night.' Then she followed her mother; the carriage-door was shut with a slam, and away they went. What was it that those blue eyes of hers had expressed? Only compassion, perhaps; and yet a confident young man might have fancied that there was a suggestion of regret in them too. Our young man was not confident. He stood staring after Lady Sophia's hired landau until it vanished round the corner, then sighed profoundly, and went back into the house with slow, heavy steps.

Now, supposing that, among the little knot of spectators congregated round the awning, there had been an individual of a slightly imaginative turn, one may guess that out of the scene above described he might easily have constructed a story—a story so common, so commonplace, that it is being repeated every day and every night, not in London only, but in every large city in the world; not in one rank of society, but in all. A careful mother, a portionless daughter, a young man of insufficient income—here are the materials for that romance which nature and circumstances are for ever creating, and for the usual melancholy result of which nobody seems to be justly open to blame. Really it cannot be helped. Young men of insufficient income ought to fall in love with heiresses; portionless young ladies ought not to encourage young men of insufficient income; and it is the

bounden duty of a careful mother to caution her daughter against reckless imprudence. The supposititious spectator might have divined without much difficulty what sort of conversation was going on inside the landau alluded to; and indeed his conjectures would not have been far wrong.

'Constance,' says Lady Sophia, 'I can't have you so much with that young Warrender. He is not at all desirable.'

'I am sorry you don't like him,' observes the young lady, talking through a yawn; 'he dances very well.'

'If he danced like the daughter of Herodias, it would make no difference. The man is a pauper!'

'He can't help that,' remarks Miss Wylie.

'I don't know, I'm sure; and, for that matter, I don't care. And really, Constance, you must get out of the habit of contradicting every word that I say. When I tell you that Mr. Warrender is not desirable, that should be enough.'

However, she did not seem to think that it was enough, for she went on scolding her daughter without intermission during the three or four minutes which the remainder of the drive occupied. Lady Sophia knew how to scold. It was by no means the only thing that she knew, although, perhaps, it was the only thing that she knew thoroughly. Her friends and her enemies were agreed in speaking of her as a very clever woman, meaning probably that she had been a very successful one. She would have been less successful, it may be surmised, if she had had a softer heart and a gentler tongue. She was thought to have displayed great talent in capturing the Duke of Grimsby and Lord Southsea; but, as a matter of fact, these captures had demanded no talent at all. Both of the noblemen in question were rich men; they neither asked nor expected anything better than to obtain wives who were beautiful, amiable, and as well-born as they; the difficulty was to get beautiful, amiable, and well-born girls to accept such husbands—for the Duke of Grimsby was old and ugly, and Lord Southsea's intemperate habits were notorious. 'Sophia,' said a certain elderly and cynical relative of hers, 'never has had and never will have any trouble with her children. She has made home so infernally unpleasant for them that they would cheerfully marry a negro with a hump upon his back to escape from it.' One's relations are not, as a rule, prone to taking too lenient a view of one's character, and perhaps this was a little hard upon Lady Sophia. Certain, however, it is that her daughters had never disobeyed her, though they had wrangled

a good deal with her before submitting to her behests. At the bottom of her heart she was rather afraid of Constance, who, unlike the others, did not wrangle, and who was accustomed to listen to her lectures in unbroken and disconcerting silence.

Constance, after remarking that Mr. Warrender danced well and could not justly be blamed for being a pauper, said nothing more on his behalf; and the consequence was that Lady Sophia's denunciations of him fell a little flat. Except defending a man whom nobody attacks, there is nothing more ridiculous than to attack a man whom nobody defends.

Now it so chanced that, while Lady Sophia and her daughter were discussing Mr. Warrender, that gentleman was discussing them. From the ball he went to his club, where he met his elder brother, to whom he sometimes confided his troubles, and who, being in the main a very good-natured elder brother, had more than once helped him out of those pecuniary difficulties into which younger brothers are apt to fall. Into his patient ears he now poured the whole history of his hopeless attachment to the beautiful Miss Wylie. Of course, he said, it was a bad job. He couldn't feel a bit sure—though he had sometimes hoped—that the girl herself cared a little for him; but what was absolutely certain was that that old wretch of a mother of hers would be dead against him. Upon the whole, perhaps, he had better go and hang himself. Candidly now, what did his brother think?

Lord Warrender, a somewhat heavy young man of sporting proclivities, who did not go much into society, said he really didn't know. Shouldn't hang himself, anyhow. Thought that, by all accounts, Lady Sophia would be a confoundedly unpleasant mother-in-law, and doubted whether she would consent to be mother-in-law to anyone under an earl. Couldn't Claud manage to fall in love with somebody else? On being emphatically assured that Claud could not by the wildest possibility ever love any woman save Constance Wylie, he scratched his head and made a grimace. No doubt Claud's allowance might be increased, and possibly that was what Claud was thinking; but the question was whether the old harridan (it was thus that Lord Warrender stigmatised poor Lady Sophia in his own mind) would be satisfied with anything moderate in the shape of an allowance; and another question was whether the game was worth the candle. One may not be a particularly brilliant specimen of the hereditary legislator; but for all that, one is not, perhaps, quite such a fool

as one looks. Therefore Lord Warrender committed himself to no rash promises; but presently he said:

'I'll tell you what; I wish you'd introduce me to these ladies. I might take soundings, don't you know—find out whether there's any chance for you, and—and that.'

Claud jumped at the suggestion. After all, he was heir-presumptive to his brother, who was as rich as Crœsus, and whose dislike for female society was well known. 'I should like nothing better,' he declared. 'Are you going to Lady Polkingham's to-morrow night?'

'Well, I wasn't,' answered Lord Warrender, 'but I can. I believe she sent me a card.'

'That's all right, then,' said Claud. 'Lady Sophia will be delighted to know you, and you might talk to her about me, and make the best of me, you know. Irreproachable moral character—considerable talents—likely to be in Parliament before long, and sure to get on—all that sort of thing. And then you could mention that I'm bound to come into a little money when old Granny dies, which is true, I suppose. She'll leave me something—a thousand pounds, most likely; but you needn't enter into particulars.'

'I'll do what I can,' Lord Warrender promised. 'All the same, if you'll be advised by me, you'll give the thing up, and go in for some other girl. There are such lots of them about.'

'Wait till you're madly in love with one of them,' returned his brother, 'and then come and tell me what you think of the others.'

'I don't think I'm over and above likely to fall in love with any of 'em,' Lord Warrender said placidly. 'Heaven preserve us from London girls!'

Wholesale condemnations of any class are usually traceable to insufficient acquaintance with that class. Lord Warrender did not know much of what he called 'London girls' (by which he probably meant girls who had passed through a London season), and within twenty-four hours he was compelled to make a mental recantation so far, at least, as one individual was concerned.

Great was the surprise, and great also the satisfaction, of Lady Sophia when, on the ensuing evening, the ineligible young man with whom she was acquainted led up to her the highly eligible young man with whom she was not. She was almost civil to the former for the sake of the latter. 'The very

husband for Constance!' was the thought that flashed instantaneously across her mind as Lord Warrender—tall, good-natured, and rather sleepy-looking—came to a standstill before her and bowed. She had thought of several men who would do very well for Constance, but of none so entirely suitable as this. Lord Warrender had not only large estates, but was possessed of house-property in London and coal-mines in the North—a young man whom any mother in England would have rejoiced to press to her heart. Lady Sophia did not do anything so startling as that, but she took great pains to please him; she told him how well she had known his father and mother in years gone by, and reproached him in a friendly way for so seldom showing his face in society.

'Oh, well,' he answered, 'I do go to dinners; balls aren't much in my line. The fact is I'm a shocking bad dancer.'

'Like most other people,' said Lady Sophia. 'There aren't half a dozen good dancers in London. I don't suppose you would disgrace yourself if you had a decent partner. Let me introduce you to my daughter, who really does dance well. You may safely trust yourself to her guidance.'

A few minutes after this Lord Warrender was passing through an agreeable and altogether novel experience: he was waltzing with Miss Wylie, and actually enjoying it. It was the first time in his life that he had enjoyed a waltz, and in the simplicity of his heart he told her so.

'Perhaps,' she remarked gravely, 'you have never before met anybody who could do your step.'

'Have I got a step?' he asked. 'I'm very glad to hear it. I shall know what to say the next time I go bumping round the room, and running into everybody. I can't be expected to steer people who don't understand my step, can I?'

'Of course not,' said Miss Wylie; 'but I don't think dancing is a particularly manly accomplishment, do you? One forgives a man for being a little awkward in a ball-room, if one knows that he can shoot, and ride, and—and fight.'

This view of the whole duty of man was not displeasing to Lord Warrender, who happened to be tolerably proficient in the three particulars specified. However, as he had a mind disposed towards equity, and as he recollected opportunely that he was where he was for the purpose of advancing his brother's interests, he said, 'Well, there's no reason why a man shouldn't dance, too, you know. Look at my brother Claud, for instance. He's about

as keen a sportsman as you're likely to meet with, and yet he's one of the shining lights of London ball-rooms, they tell me.'

'Yes,' answered Miss Wylie, rather pensively, 'I should think he would do everything well.'

'Not that he's quite as good a shot as I am,' Lord Warrender felt bound to add, in justice to himself. 'I mean he ain't so certain, you know.'

Miss Wylie had a little laugh at this. 'What a funny thing it is,' she said, 'that you men are always accusing women of being jealous, and that it never occurs to you that you are just as bad as we are! You think yourselves far above any feeling of the kind because you don't envy a man who is better looking or better dressed than you are; but you ride jealous and you shoot jealous.'

'Indeed, we do not!' interrupted Lord Warrender, indignantly. 'Now, upon my word, that's the most unfair thing I ever heard said in my life! Some fellows may behave as you say; but they're quite exceptional, I assure you. Of course I know that I'm a pretty fair shot; and why shouldn't I say so? But I don't deny for a moment that there are two or three men who shoot a great deal better.'

'As many as that?' asked Miss Wylie.

'Yes,' answered Lord Warrender, consideringly, 'I could certainly name three. As for riding, I never pretended that I could ride. I go pretty straight, it's true; but that is because I'm well mounted and don't funk. Now, you may take my word for it, Miss Wylie, that you'll find as little envy or jealousy in the hunting-field as in any assemblage of human beings that you can think of.'

Thus began a conversation which Lord Warrender found extremely interesting, and in the course of which he clean forgot the existence of his younger brother. His companion made herself very agreeable to him; her remarks were shrewd and to the point; she put him at his ease, and he had a pleasing conviction that she liked him. In short, to use his own phrase, they 'got on together like one o'clock.' He never suspected that she had purposely led him on to discourse upon topics in which he might be presumed to be at home; nor did he take any note of the rapid flight of time. While they were talking several young men came up to claim promised dances, and were dismissed with an innocent assurance on Miss Wylie's part that they must have made some mistake. Lord Warrender chuckled at their discomfiture. He

had always been given to understand that it is a lady's prerogative to throw over unwelcome partners, and he would have been a greater stoic than he was if he had not been a little flattered by the implied compliment to himself. At length, however, Miss Wylie requested to be taken back to Lady Sophia, who received the errant couple with her most gracious smile.

'Well, Lord Warrender,' said she, 'has Constance succeeded in making a convert of you? Are you beginning to find out that dancing has some charms, after all?'

"Really, do you know, I think I am,' Lord Warrender answered, laughing. 'How many balls are you going to to-morrow night? Anywhere where I should have a chance of meeting you, if I turned up?'

'Sit down, and I'll try to remember,' said Lady Sophia. 'Let me see; to-morrow is Thursday, isn't it?'

She began running over the list of her engagements; and while she was thus occupied Claud Warrender slipped up and led Miss Wylie away. It is not likely that this manœuvre escaped her ladyship's notice; but her brow remained unclouded. 'Duty first, pleasure afterwards,' she may have thought. It is a great mistake to spur a willing horse, and really dear Constance had behaved admirably that evening. Let her but agree to marry the right man, and she should be free to flirt with the wrong one to any extent in reason.

On the following morning the two brothers met. 'How did you find Lady Sophia?' inquired the younger. 'I needn't ask, though, for I saw her grinning and nodding her head at you like an old marionette. Did you manage to put in a word for me?'

'Well, no,' answered Lord Warrender, penitently, 'I'm afraid I didn't; the fact is she didn't give me much chance. I praised you up to the daughter, though.'

'Oh, that wasn't necessary.'

'It wasn't, eh? All right; I'll run you down the next time I see her. I'll tell you what, Claud, that's the prettiest girl and—and the jolliest girl I ever met. I declare I almost wish I was in your shoes!'

'I wish I was in yours,' returned Claud, laughing; 'I shouldn't be much afraid of the old woman, then.'

'Oh, I expect she'll come round all right,' said Lord Warrender, confidently. 'She isn't such a bad sort of an old woman, you know.'

'H'm! that depends upon who is talking to her,' remarked Claud. 'Anyhow, I hope you'll make her understand that *you* don't want to marry her daughter.'

'Dear me!' said Lord Warrender, looking rather alarmed, 'I trust she doesn't require any assurance of that kind.'

He was by way of not being a marrying man. In former years all his friends and relations, beginning with his mother, had urged upon him somewhat too frequently and forcibly that it was the duty of a man in his position to marry. More than one lady, too, had striven hard to marry him; so that he had ended by becoming disgusted with marriage as an institution, and had withdrawn himself almost entirely from the society of ladies. Yet it crossed his mind now that, supposing he ever should take a wife, he would like her to resemble Constance Wylie.

More than once in the course of the week that followed this passing notion of his recurred to him. He met Miss Wylie again and again; he danced with her repeatedly, and found, not only that their steps accorded, but that her tastes and opinions agreed quite curiously with his own. He was conscious of a distinct sensation of displeasure when she said to him one evening, 'How wise you are to remain single! You are such a thorough bachelor in all your ways that I can't fancy you domesticated.'

This had hitherto been quite his own opinion; nevertheless, he could not help rejoining, 'Oh, well, I don't know about that. I suppose if I met my affinity I could be as domestic as anybody else.'

'Very likely; but I don't think you have met your affinity yet, Lord Warrender, and what I admire in you is, that you haven't allowed yourself to be drawn into matrimony by somebody who isn't your affinity. Upon second thoughts, though, I don't know why I should admire you. It is so simple not to propose to a woman whom you don't care for. That is a man's privilege, and one wonders that men don't avail themselves of it more extensively.'

'I always thought,' observed Lord Warrender, 'that it was a woman's privilege to refuse a man whom she didn't care for.'

Miss Wylie laughed. 'Oh, I don't think you can have believed that,' she said. 'Good as you are, and simple as you are, you must be aware that that privilege is reserved for heiresses.'

Well, no doubt he was aware of it; and from this and other similar hints which she dropped, he was shrewd enough to per-

ceive that she was alluding to her own case. Most people, when they utter oracular generalities, do mean to allude to their own case. Yet he could not quite bring himself to say (as possibly she may have wished him to say) that he knew she was attached to his brother, and that he was ready to provide for his brother to such an extent as to bring that young gentleman's marriage with his supposed affinity within the range of conceivable events. For one thing, he did not know positively that Miss Wylie regarded his brother as her affinity; and Claud had told him somewhat arrogantly that his cause required no pleading in that quarter. He avoided mentioning Claud's name to her. He was prepared when matters should become further advanced—if ever they did become further advanced—to behave loyally and generously; but in the meantime he did not see that he could be of much service.

In short, before a fortnight had elapsed Lord Warrender was over head and ears in love with the beautiful Miss Wylie. For this it must be admitted that he was in no way to blame. A man can't help falling in love; and the simple truth is, that he was unconscious of any such catastrophe having befallen him. All he knew was that he was charmed and happy in Miss Wylie's society, that he looked forward to encountering her at the entertainments which he had taken to frequenting, and that the days on which he failed to meet her were dull and blank days for him. One might say as much as that about one's grandmother, supposing one's grandmother to be a singularly fascinating and sympathetic person.

But it is hardly necessary to add that this innocent and childlike view of the situation was not participated in by those who saw Lord Warrender devoting himself, night after night, to the fair *débutante*; and at length a time came when the opinions of a censorious world were revealed to him with startling abruptness. At a ball, one evening, he was meditatively watching Claud and Miss Wylie waltzing together, and was wishing in a vague way that nature had bestowed upon him as handsome a face as his brother's, when Lady Sophia beckoned to him to approach.

'Lord Warrender,' said she, after moving away her dress, so as to admit of his sitting down beside her, 'I want to have a little talk with you. I have noticed—and I am sure it has been a great pleasure to me—that you and dear Constance have become fast friends. You are always together; you dance continually with her, and I think you admire her very much, don't you?'

'Nobody can admire your daughter more than I do, Lady ophia,' responded Lord Warrender, with much heartiness; for, ddly enough, he had not the least suspicion of what was coming.

'I am quite convinced of that; and—well, and so are other people. You must not mind my dispensing with ceremony: it is so often the best and kindest thing to do. And I dare say you will understand that, situated as I am, I am obliged sometimes to say things which I should be contented with thinking, if dear Constance's father were still alive. Now, you know, Lord Warrender, you have been dancing a great deal with Constance, and people have begun to talk. In fairness to her I feel that I ought to tell you this.'

'I'm—I'm awfully sorry—I won't do it again,' gasped Lord Warrender, utterly taken aback.

If he had been looking at Lady Sophia, instead of at the floor, he would have seen an ominous change come over her face; but it was in her most dulcet tones that she rejoined: 'Dear Lord Warrender, why should you not do it again? If you feel as I think—as I am sure you do, you have only to say so, and then you will be able to dance with her as much as you like.'

'Good gracious!' ejaculated the astounded individual to whom this direct invitation was addressed. He had heard, in novels and plays, of men being asked their intentions, but had always supposed that, if such unpleasant experiences ever took place in real life, they were confined to lower middle-class society. He was considerably alarmed, but he was also angry; and it was the predominance of the latter emotion that enabled him to reply:

'You are making a great mistake, Lady Sophia. As I told you before, I admire Miss Wylie immensely, and if I were a marrying man—but I am not a marrying man; and, in any case, I couldn't think of offering myself to her; because I suspect—in fact, it's as plain as can be—that she is likely to become engaged to my brother before long.'

Lady Sophia broke into a shrill laugh. 'How ridiculous!' she cried. 'You are far too modest, Lord Warrender; and you may take my word for it that Constance is about as likely to become engaged to your brother as to the man in the moon. No; I don't think you will find your brother a very formidable rival.'

'There is no question of rivalry in the matter,' returned Lord Warrender rather crossly, as he got up. 'We'll say no more about it, if you don't mind.'

'Just as you please,' answered Lady Sophia, with undiminished sweetness; 'only I must remind you once more that I am bound to consider what other people say, and I know that if they see you dancing with Constance as you have done lately, they will say that you are engaged to her. Indeed, that is what I myself should conclude if you dance with her again.'

Lord Warrender swallowed down an uncivil retort, made a little bow, and walked straight out of the room. 'So there's an end of *that*!' he soliloquised, as he drove away. 'No more dancing for me, thank you! I'm sorry for it—sorry for the poor girl too, to have a mother of that kind. What an unprincipled old creature! I suppose she thought I was such a fool that it didn't matter how openly she played her cards with me.'

Nobody likes to be thought a fool or to be treated as such; and, without entertaining any exalted opinion of his own wisdom, Lord Warrender was a good deal annoyed by Lady Sophia's cool assumption that he was a man whom no skill was required to bring to book. 'You don't quite know me yet, my lady,' thought he to himself, as he told his servant to pack up his things and engage berths on board the steamer which was to sail for Christiansand on the following day. He had a river in Norway and a small house adjacent thereto, whither he was accustomed to betake himself every year in the month of June, with contemptuous disregard of the London season. This year he had postponed his departure, having found the season not wholly devoid of attractions; but now there was nothing to keep him any longer away from the salmon, and off he went, despatching a few valedictory lines to his brother:—

'Dear Claud,—I'm afraid I can't help you much with Miss Wylie. You were right about Lady Sophia; she is a detestable old hag, and I shouldn't wish to have her for a mother-in-law myself. However, if you can see your way at all, and if it is a question of money, let me know. I'll do what I can for you, within ordinary limits; but I still think you had better try to fall in love with somebody else. I'm off to Norway to fish. Very glad to see you, if you care to come over. Yours affectionately W.'

This rather heartless missive met with no response; nor did any of the other men to whom Lord Warrender had hastily telegraphed an offer of hospitality see fit to avail themselves of it. But that did not distress him particularly; for he was a man to whom sport was all-sufficient. At any rate, he had hitherto found it so; and that he did not find it so now was a circumstance

which gave him matter for grave reflection. To play a gigantic salmon for two hours, to lose him in the very moment of victory, and to feel that so frightful a calamity leaves you perfectly cool, calm, and indifferent, is, as every fisherman will admit, a sign of mental derangement which demands careful looking into. Lord Warrender had not been a week in Norway when he passed through this strange experience; and, as self-deception was not among his capacities, he very soon found out what was wrong with him. There was no doubt about it: he was in love with Constance Wylie, the girl of his brother's heart—the girl who, as he could not but guess, would easily be induced to marry him under pressure of maternal solicitude.

Does such a situation present any real difficulty?—and can there be the shadow of a doubt as to what was Lord Warrender's duty, under the circumstances? Of course, to us dispassionate outsiders there can be none. We should scorn to be accepted for the sake of our rank or our wealth (if we had those advantages); we should consider ourselves bound to give way to our younger brother (if we possessed such an encumbrance), and to remain resolutely in the background, at least until his fate should be decided. Nevertheless, it is probable that, were we to find ourselves in Lord Warrender's position, *advocatus diaboli* would be able to meet us with very plausible representations. There was nothing to prove that Miss Wylie was in love with Claud Warrender; there were excellent reasons for believing that she would be happy as the wife of his elder brother, and some for doubting whether she would be happy as the wife of a man whose character was not remarkable for steadiness or solidity. And then came the final, overwhelming argument: 'I never was really in love before in my life; I never shall love any other woman as I love her. Hang it all! haven't I the right to fight my own battle? And is it my fault if Claud and I don't take the field upon exactly even terms?'

But one of the great benefits of a healthy, open-air existence is that it keeps a man sane in body and mind. Lord Warrender fought the devil for three weeks in those Norwegian solitudes, and worsted him. At the end of the struggle he was not certain that he would not be morally justified in giving his brother due notice and then entering into competition with him; but he was quite certain that he could not adopt that course. 'There are some things that a fellow can't do, don't you know?' was his mental summing up of the question.

Having made up his mind, he became easier. He had lingering hope, to which he was fairly entitled; but he was fairly determined to keep his promise to Claud. Should the latter's marriage prove to be contingent upon an increase of income, an increase of income should be forthcoming. More than that he could hardly do or say; and more, it might be assumed, would not be expected of him.

Apparently, not even so much as that was expected of him. He spent the summer and autumn in his usual fashion, shooting grouse in Yorkshire, stalking in Scotland, distinguishing himself among the pheasants in Norfolk, and finally taking up his quarters at Melton and settling down to the serious business of hunting for the winter. During all this time he heard nothing of Lady Sophia and her daughter and only received one communication from his brother, who was a poor correspondent. Claud wrote in November to decline an invitation to join a shooting-party, and merely made a passing allusion to his amatory troubles. All that he said upon this subject was contained in a single brief paragraph at the end of his letter:—'I haven't taken your good advice and transferred my affections, though there isn't the ghost of a hope for me so long as old Lady Sophia lives—and, like Auld Robin Gray's wife, she's "no like to dee." I met them at a country house last week. People tell me that she had set her heart on catching you last season, and was awfully sold when you bolted off to Norway in such a hurry. I dare say you've forgotten all about last season, though.'

Lord Warrender had forgotten nothing. He tossed the letter aside with an impatient exclamation. 'I think Claud ought to do one thing or the other,' he muttered. It would be rather hard if, after all, some third person should step in and quietly bear away the prize.

However, he had resolved in his dogged, phlegmatic way that he would not intervene until he could do so with a clear conscience. So he went on with his hunting, and enjoyed himself after a fashion; and the winter passed away and the spring came, bringing an end of hunting and nothing for an occupationless sportsman to do but to adjourn to the metropolis. Lord Warrender hated London, and it has already been said that he hated balls; yet, in this particular year, he removed himself and his belongings to the family mansion in Portland Place, in a corner of which he dwelt, with a certain alacrity; and the very first invitation to a ball which he received he accepted.

He had a distinct and perfectly legitimate hope in his mind when he did so. Honour did not compel him to avoid all occasions of seeing Miss Wylie; and his fate decreed that before he had been five minutes in the ballroom he should be accosted by Lady Sophia. The frank cordiality of her greeting took him by surprise. He had not expected a very kindly reception at her hands after his behaviour of the preceding season; but it seemed that he had done her an injustice.

'So we meet again at last, Lord Warrender!' she exclaimed, while she held his hand. 'And where have you been hiding yourself all this long time? Come and give me an account of your proceedings.'

Lord Warrender obeyed wonderingly. 'And you?' he asked, when he had concluded a succinct recital—'where have you been, and what have you been doing? And—er—how is Miss Wylie?'

He was unable to put this last question with all the cheerful indifference which he had intended to throw into his voice. It was the only one of the three which Lady Sophia thought it necessary to answer.

'As well as possible, thanks,' she said. 'There she is. Don't you think she looks well?'

Constance floated past them at the moment. She was laughing at something that her partner was saying to her; she was more beautiful than ever, if that could be; she seemed to be in high spirits, and had apparently not a care in the world.

'Yes,' answered Lord Warrender, with a smothered sigh; 'she looks very well.' Lady Sophia's countenance assumed an expression of innocent maternal pride. Her eyes followed her daughter for a few moments, and then she said softly: 'Aren't you going to dance with her to-night? She used to be your instructress last year—do you remember?'

He remembered it very well; and he also remembered what he had been told would be the consequence of his dancing with her again. Did Lady Sophia remember her own words? He was half-inclined to remind her of them, but, after an instant's hesitation, decided that he wouldn't. She seemed disposed to let bygones be bygones, and, for his own part, he had no wish to drag painful reminiscences from the oblivion to which they were best consigned. Besides, he was conscious of a great longing to waltz just once more with Constance. 'It shall only be once,' he said to himself; 'and I won't try to meet her again—at any rate, until

I know for certain whether Claud is really out of the running or not.'

The upshot of this was that, a few minutes later, he was careering round the room in the headlong fashion which he greatly enjoyed, and to which the lady who had the honour of being his unique partner contrived to accommodate herself with as much skill as of yore. Her manner was friendly, if not quite as cordial as her mother's; she made his heart sink by blushing a little when he casually introduced his brother's name into the conversation; but indeed she did not seem to be listening very attentively to what he was saying, and he noticed a look of disquietude and apprehension on her face.

'I wish people wouldn't stare at us so!' she exclaimed, when the dance was over. 'Is it at me or at you that they are looking, do you think?'

'Oh, I expect it's at me,' answered Lord Warrender, laughing; 'I'm a sort of a dancing bear, don't you know?'

'This is our dance, Miss Wylie,' interposed an eager young man, who had pushed his way through the crowd, and who looked as if he rather anticipated a struggle for his rights.

Miss Wylie, however, did not dispute the assertion. She took the new-comer's arm at once, and her late partner, falling back a few paces, suddenly found himself shaking hands with Lady Sophia. Why was he shaking hands with her? He had done that already; but, of course, if she wished to repeat the ceremony, it was not for him to disappoint her.

'My dear Lord Warrender,' she was saying affectionately, 'I am so glad! so very glad! But not surprised; for I quite expected it. Such a pretty way of letting us all know! And everybody says you and Constance will make quite an ideal couple—so admirably suited to one another in all respects!'

Lord Warrender was just the sort of man to come out strong in a moment of emergency. His intellect was not a great one; but he had iron nerves, and never lost his presence of mind. 'I see,' said he quietly, 'you stick to what you said a year ago, and take my dancing with your daughter as equivalent to an offer of marriage. And you have been round the room, announcing the engagement to your friends.'

Lady Sophia nodded smilingly; but there was just a shadow of apprehension in her eyes. Perhaps she had not anticipated quite so ready an acquiescence. 'It is always better to make these things known at once,' said she; 'then people can't gossip

any more. They have gossipped a great deal, you know, and the affair has been going on *rather* a long time, hasn't it? We can't talk here; but you will come and see us to-morrow, won't you?'

'Perhaps,' answered Lord Warrender, gravely. 'Anyhow, we shall meet to-morrow night at Brentford House. In the meantime, I may as well tell you—or perhaps I needn't tell you?—that I have not proposed to Miss Wylie.'

With that he turned on his heel, and made for the door. But although he meant to leave the house before anyone should have time to thrust congratulations upon him which might be awkward to reply to, he did not mean to go away alone. He had caught sight of his brother, standing among several non-dancers, and on his passage he took the younger man by the arm. 'Come home with me, Claud,' he whispered; 'I want to speak to you.'

Shortly afterwards, the two brothers were in Lord Warrender's smoking-room in Portland Place. They had not exchanged a word during the short time; but now Claud, whose face was very pale, said, before taking the arm-chair which was pushed towards him:

'Look here, Warrender; I suppose I can guess what you are going to say. There's a rumour that you are engaged to Constance Wylie.'

Lord Warrender lighted a cigar deliberately. 'Are you in a position to forbid the banns?' he inquired.

'No,' answered the other, 'I am not. She won't be able to hold out against her mother. She says she will; but I know better. Perhaps she may not give in to-morrow or next week or even next month; but she will be beaten in the long run. So, if you like the idea of marrying a girl who doesn't love you, and who does love me, you have only to sit still and wait.'

Lord Warrender drew a long breath. 'I shouldn't like that idea,' he observed calmly. 'I suppose, from your saying that she loves you, you and she have come to an understanding.'

'If you can call it an understanding. I know that she loves me, because I have heard it from her own lips; but it's a perfectly hopeless case. I have a little over a thousand a year of my own, and no prospects. Even if you increased my income, as you were kind enough to say that you would do—even if you doubled it—it would make no difference. I was obliged to tell her that she was free, so far as I was concerned.'

'After drawing a confession of love from her?'

'I couldn't help that, Warrender.'

'Well, I dare say not; most likely I should have done the same thing in your place. Now listen to me, Claud, and let us see whether between us we can't outwit her ladyship, who, I must say, strikes me as being too clever by half.'

Thereupon Lord Warrender briefly related the circumstances which had brought about his so-called engagement to a lady whom he declared that he had not the least intention of marrying. The conference which ensued was somewhat lengthy; but it appeared to have a satisfactory termination; for when the brothers parted the younger shook the elder warmly by the hand, exclaiming, 'Upon my word, Warrender, you're the best fellow out!'

'Glad you think so,' answered Lord Warrender, with a slight smile.

Perhaps Claud would have thought his brother an even better fellow if the whole truth had been told; but there are truths which it is desirable, if not essential, to conceal.

Lady Sophia arrived at Brentford House on the following evening with an unruffled exterior, but with a mind ill at ease. Lord Warrender had not called upon her during the day; she had passed through a painful scene with Constance, who had shown a mutinous spirit, and had addressed her most disrespectfully; and what future troubles might lie before her, she hardly dared to think. The moment that she entered the ball-room she looked anxiously round it in search of her prospective son-in-law; but he was not there, and she had to wait a whole hour before her eyes were gladdened by the sight of his tall figure advancing through the doorway, followed by that of his younger brother. He marched straight up to her, and, without wasting time upon preliminaries, plunged into the subject which was uppermost in the thoughts of both of them.

'Lady Sophia,' said he, 'I have been turning over in my mind what you said last night, and although, when I asked Miss Wylie to dance with me, I did not intend asking her to be my wife, I suppose I can't honourably back out of an engagement which you have chosen to make public. One thing, however, I must warn you of, and that is that I have naturally a very jealous and suspicious temper. I don't know that Miss Wylie cares for me, nor have I the slightest ground for supposing that she does. Therefore, if, after this, I see her dancing twice consecutively with any man, I shall take it for granted that she is in love with that man. What is sauce for the goose (you think me a goose, don't you?) is sauce for the gander, and I don't see why tests that are made to apply to me shouldn't apply to others.'

'How absurd!' exclaimed Lady Sophia. 'Of course I will tell Constance what you say, and, if you choose, she shall give up dancing altogether; but really your suspicions are utterly unfounded.'

'Do you mean to tell me, Lady Sophia, that your daughter is in love with me?'

Lady Sophia hesitated. She was playing an audacious game, and had already obtained what she believed to be a signal success; but she well knew that some hard battles remained to be fought, and that it behoved her to be circumspect. 'Constance,' she began, 'is very modest and very timid—so unlike most girls of the present day! You must not expect her to rush into your arms.'

After this preface, she entered upon a lengthy exposition of the peculiarities of modest and timid characters, to which her neighbour lent a somewhat inattentive ear. He was watching Miss Wylie, who was leaving the ball-room at the conclusion of a dance, on his brother's arm, and the moment that he saw her reappear with the same partner he moved abruptly away.

He had made his entrance without greeting his hostess: he now hastened to repair this omission. The Duchess of Brentford, who was surrounded by a phalanx of dowagers, held out her hand to him as he approached, and said exactly what he had expected her to say—'So I hear we are to congratulate you, Lord Warrender. You are a very fortunate man, I think.'

'Eh?—congratulate me?' repeated Lord Warrender, assuming a puzzled look. 'Oh! I see what you mean; but you're putting the saddle on the wrong horse, Duchess. It's my brother who is engaged to Miss Wylie; I thought everybody knew that I am a confirmed bachelor.'

The Duchess looked astonished, but not convinced. 'Really?' said she; 'and yet it was Lady Sophia herself who told me.'

'You must have misunderstood her; she said *Claud* Warrender, not *Lord* Warrender. For goodness' sake, correct the report, or everybody will say I've been thrown over, and then I shall have all the old women in London trying to console me.'

He corrected it himself in several instances before he rejoined Lady Sophia, by whose side he sank down with a sigh of relief.

'Lady Sophia,' said he, 'prepare yourself for a shock. I am not going to marry your daughter, and my brother Claud is. She has danced with him twice running, and, as I told you I should, I take that as a sign that she is in love with him. Besides, it's the truth. I have borrowed a leaf out of your book, and been round the room telling everybody that they are engaged; I said

your announcement of last night had been misunderstood. Don't screech or make a row until you have heard what I have to say, please; you can't get out of it, and you may as well make the best of it. There's a property in Warwickshire, left me by my uncle, and worth from six to seven thousand a year, which I mean to hand over to Claud. It ought to have gone to him any way; I'm sure I don't want it; it takes me all my time to live in the houses that I've got. And that isn't all. I have reasons which I am not going to tell you, but which are perfectly respectable reasons, for thinking that I shall never marry, and Claud, as you know, is heir-presumptive. I'm a thundering bad rider; I never look where I'm going, and an accident might happen any day, don't you see?'

Lady Sophia bit her fan, and looked pensive. Seven thousand a year is very far from being the same thing as seventy thousand; yet in these hard times one may have to put up with less. And then, the possibilities!

'Oh!' said Lord Warrender, with a laugh, 'I don't promise to break my neck, you know; but it's an imaginable contingency, and you can keep up your spirits by thinking about it. Now, Lady Sophia, I hope we shall remain friends. Very few things are worth quarrelling over, and, for my part, now that I've paid you out in your own coin, I don't bear malice. Only you really shouldn't be so awfully clever.'

He slipped away without waiting for a rejoinder, and soon found an opportunity of offering his congratulations to his future sister-in-law, whose eyes expressed the thanks which her lips had some difficulty in framing.

Thus was accomplished a sacrifice the existence of which has never been suspected. Lady Sophia, perceiving that under no circumstances could she hope to recapture the elder brother, was fain to content herself with the younger, and before the close of the season Constance Wylie became Mrs. Warrender.

Her husband has entered Parliament, and is likely to make a career for himself; both his future and hers, as far as appearances go, will be prosperous and happy. Lord Warrender has not yet broken his neck; but perhaps it would be rash to affirm that his heart is equally intact. Broken hearts are not always made manifest to the world by pale cheeks and haggard looks; and indeed a man who has suffered the loss of his capacity for falling in love may lead a wholesome, useful, and not altogether disagreeable life, just as he may after the loss of an arm or a leg.

W. E. Norris.

Whist Signalling and Whist Strategy.

AN article of mine in this magazine on the question whether whist signalling is honest, has been naturally regarded by many whist players, if not by most, as heretical. Whist signalling is now so widely adopted in this country, and so many players find their only claim to be regarded as fair partners depending on their readiness in signalling and reading signals, that when the system is questioned in any way, they feel as Dominicans felt of old when tenets they regarded as sacred were dealt with as doubtful. Still they cannot deny that many excellent players are opposed to the signalling system, root and branch. Pembridge, Mogul, the whist editor of the *Australasian*, and a number of others, reject the system as absolutely spoiling the game; some (like Mr. F. H. Lewis), who use the system most skilfully, yet object to it on principle, and only use it because it has become established. A few only may deny the fairness of whist signalling, but many deny its value.

I do not propose here to touch further on the question whether whist signalling is honest. I was careful in my former article to admit that the whist-signalling code must be learned and followed by all who wish to play with those who practise it; and this practically decides the question of its honesty as actually employed. Just as gambling cannot be considered immoral for those who have never duly weighed the question of its morality, so whist signalling is perfectly fair for those who have not noticed or duly considered the circumstances which make it almost as unfair, in reality, as kicking under the table would be. On this point I would only add that Cavendish himself, who has long been the chief champion of whist signalling, shows his intrinsic estimation of its unfairness by his anxious attempts to prove that all the signals are merely developments of the principles of whist strategy. He evidently feels, as every real player of the game must feel, that the question of honesty turns alto-

gether on this point. If the signals are arbitrary, they are as unfair as coughing, sneezing, or drumming on the table, used for signalling, would admittedly be. If they are actual developments of strategic principles, they are, of course, perfectly fair. I directed my argument wholly to this point. Unless I mistake (and no one has shown any flaw in my reasoning), I showed that there are at least two errors in the idea that the signals are developments of principles. There is no development in question, and no principle is involved: in all other respects perhaps Cavendish may be pretty nearly right.

But now I propose to consider rather the value than the propriety of whist signalling, knowing that players are not likely to be very ready to question the fairness of methods of play which they consider to be advantageous.

In the first place it should be remembered that the finest whist players yet known knew nothing of our signals. It would probably have surprised Deschapelles had he been told that the time would come when persons calling themselves whist players would think more of a number of arbitrary signals, taxing only the attention, than of all the points of strategy which he and his contemporaries regarded as the essence of the game. He would probably have been rather more than surprised if he had heard of such a saying as a critic in the *Pall Mall Gazette* got off against me, that whist without signalling is, in fact, whist without a purpose. Clay used to say that he had never played with anyone who came near Deschapelles for rapidity in recognising when there would arise occasion for playing the *grand coup* (that is under-trumping his partner or throwing away a winning card to avoid the lead when leading would involve the loss of a trick out of two which might both be made if the coup player were led up to). *This* is whist. It is strategy of this sort which alone makes the game worth playing by intelligent persons, who need something more than mere pip-counting to get enjoyment out of a card game. But how many of the modern whist players, whose whole attention is directed to watching for Peters, Echoes, Penultimates, and for opportunities for displaying these signals, ever see the occasion for the *coup*, even when it stares them in the face? As for seeing it four or five tricks ahead, not one of them ever does. Even the great high priest of the signalling system knows so little in actual practice of the *grand coup*, that a dozen editions of his book on whist contained, as an example of this stroke of strategy, a hand in which he himself had done his best to throw

away a certain game by resorting to the *coup* unnecessarily. In his Essays, Cavendish refers to this particular hand as a triumph of whist strategy; and it was not until Mogul, the arch-enemy of conventional whist, pointed out the rottenness of the play, that this triumphant example of the *grand coup* was finally dismissed to its appropriate limbo. One wonders what Deschapelles would have thought of this. If he could study the game just as Cavendish played it, having also had the signals explained to him, for they come in to make Cavendish's mistakes less excusable, he would probably have spoken somewhat as follows:—'Aha! I see, this system is excellent—*for your adversaries.* This chief teacher of yours is carefully shown by his adversary, on the left, that he has five diamonds. *My* adversaries were not so accommodating. And then, having considerately exhausted his mind (so I must imagine) in looking out for this signal, he forthwith proceeds to avoid two obvious paths to victory, in order to adopt a course which gives five chances to one against success. Or *peut-être*, in this new whist, which is, I perceive, somewhat conventional, there is a certain satisfaction in playing the *grand coup*, even when it is more likely to do harm than good. *We* were so simple (you may hardly credit it) that positively we thought more of winning or saving the game than we did of playing *coups*. Of the signals we knew nothing, and so could give our adversaries none of the information you considerately supply them with.'

This would not be simply *persiflage*. There is a truth well worth considering by whist players, underlying it all. Here is the most accomplished (I do not say the best) whist player of the day, not only failing utterly in a point of whist strategy in actual play, but actually failing to see his mistakes when studying the game through at his leisure. None of the signal-lovers who study his book note the mistakes affecting their master's play. Content to observe that all the signals are duly hoisted throughout the game, they find nothing wrong in the strategy. It is only when the game comes to be looked over by one who cares more for whist strategy than for pip-counting with the signallers, that the mistakes are found out.

Does not this look as though modern signalling whist were altogether inferior to the old-fashioned scientific, that is to say strategic, game?

And now let us see how far the use of the various signals affects whist strategy.

Of course no whist player can doubt that in the majority of

cases two partners gain more by the information they may legitimately convey to each other, when playing in accordance with customary methods, than they lose by conveying information to their enemies. It is a prevalent opinion with players, not acquainted with whist principles, that if a player does harm by confusing his partner, he does more good to their common cause by confusing the enemies. But experience shows that this is not the case. Cavendish and others—myself included—have given various reasons for this observed fact. But reasoning is not necessary; for the point is one which must necessarily be determined by experience. And now by a century and a half of experience the matter has been settled. If however I were asked what, after careful study of the matter, I regarded as the reason for the invariable failure of irregular play against combined play, I should say that if two partners misunderstand each other, their whole play is divided; whereas their two opponents, if working together, are but partially affected by such misunderstanding of their opponents' manœuvres. The case may be compared to a contest between a force of—say—2,600 men, against two ill-commanded bodies, each of 1,300 men; these two bodies, not working in harmony, may, in some degree, distract the attention of the combined force against which they are working; but this will not prevent their being separately crushed as the contest proceeds.

It must be admitted, however, that Mathews, eighty years since, laid down the correct limits of this doctrine when he pointed out that when two partners have between them fair strength an open game is best; but where there is weakness, it is generally better to play more cautiously, as information will be then of more use to the enemy than to the partner. He very plainly advocates, however, what many suppose to be peculiar to modern whist. 'The more plainly you demonstrate your hand to your partner,' he says, 'the better. Be particularly cautious not to deceive him in his or your own leads, or when he is likely to have the lead. A concealed game may now and then succeed in the suits of your adversaries, but this should not be attempted before you have made a considerable proficiency, and then but seldom, as its frequency would destroy the effect.'

Now it appears at a first view as though this first principle of whist disposed of the whole question. The various conventions at whist nearly all relate to strong hands; and the kind of information they are calculated to give is therefore nearly always

likely—if the general principles of whist are carefully attended to—to be advantageous.

But this theoretical advantage, even if its existence be admitted, in the case of very skilful players, has to be largely discounted when we consider players of average strength, or even many who possess far more than average ability.

It must be remembered that not one player in a thousand notes, in an ordinary hand at whist, every point of play which—assuming there has been no underplay—may throw light on the position of the cards. For all but the whist genius, who is in full practice, and who has strengthened his whist powers (of memory, attention, combination, and so forth) by unremitting, time-wasting assiduity, so as to convert a pleasing recreation into a weariness of the flesh, the various points involved in the system of whist conventions suffice to occupy all the attention, and to tax memory to the utmost. Players of considerable capacity for the game have all power for whist strategy driven out of them by the distraction which the constant watch for signals of various sorts, and for opportunities of displaying them, naturally produces. They signal and echo, play penultimates or ante-penultimates, or adopt in its full complexity the American 'fourth-best' system; and perhaps they acquire a sure habit of noticing these conventions not only when played by their partner but as played by their adversaries. There, however, their whist powers are limited. Whist strategy, which perhaps but for their devotion to whist signalling they might become fairly proficient in, is an unknown art to them. They neither know how to exercise nor how to oppose it. They do not even see the opportunity for its exercise or the occasion for its encounter, as one or the other arises. Their method involves so great a strain upon the attention that no power is left for the exercise of strategic skill.

This is not mere assertion. No one who plays much at whist, varying often his company, can fail to notice repeated examples of utterly stupid play by those who are most constant and unrelaxing in their devotion to the signalling system. If whist strategy, properly so called, were not becoming a thing of the past (in consequence chiefly, I firmly believe, of the deadening influence of the conventional game), I could startle whist-players by recording marvellous examples of foolish play such as in the old times one never heard of. Now, however, they would hardly be appreciated as they deserve.

Consider such a case as the following, which I saw in the last

game I watched before these words were written:—A and B were playing against Y and Z. After A had played two rounds of hearts, he led trumps (spades) in response to B's signal. Now it so chanced that B's signal, as is frequently the case, was a piece of whist folly, being just what was wanted to show Y and Z how they must play to save the game. However, they failed to save it, through a piece of still more absurd folly—a most unscientific adherence to certain wooden conventions which have recently been in vogue, though there were the clearest indications of the proper strategic course for saving the game. Z indeed played correctly enough. He had control over the heart suit, and retained it. But Y found himself after a round of trumps with six diamonds, headed by the queen, three clubs headed by the queen, and a small heart. Trumps being led, for the second round of them, by B, it should have been obvious to Y that he must not discard a club, because then probably he would lose control of the suit; nor a diamond, because his partner would then be apt to suppose diamonds the suit he wished led (this being the recent interpretation of a discard made to trump strength with the enemy), and the lead of diamonds by Z would plainly be of little service to Y and Z. Clearly Y should throw away his useless heart. But in adherence to modern whist conventions Y discarded a diamond. So far, however, no harm had been done. At the next round—trumps, which again came from the enemy—Y played far more foolishly. With the idea that having now shown his long suit he would do well to retain some strength in it, and that his next best discard was from the next longest suit, he discarded a club, though he still had a perfectly useless card to throw away. The natural result followed. The third round of trumps fell to Z, who still remained with one trump. Z led a diamond, retaining the master-card in hearts; the trick went to the enemy, and Y lost the queen—his only good diamond. B then drew Z's last trump, led clubs—B's suit; A B made the ace and king, drawing Y's queen, and then made the knave of clubs and two tricks with small clubs. The last trick fell to the king of diamonds, held by A. A and B thus made six by cards.

Now this unfortunate result was not due to the mischance of whist war. It was not even due to careless or ordinarily bad play. It was due to sheer stupidity, such as could scarcely have been displayed except by one whose whist intellect had been dulled by the signalling system and the acceptance of recent fads as constant and unfailing whist rules.

Consider what would have happened, and what—be it noticed—Y-Z were entitled to expect, had common sense guided Y's play.

Four tricks had fallen to A-B. At the fourth Y should have discarded the small heart. As that was the enemy's suit, Z would be certain not to mistake the discard for an indication of length. At the fifth round (trumps' third round), taken by Z, a small diamond was the only discard to be thought of. Z would infer that diamonds were Y's longest suit, but not a suit strong enough to be indicated by the discard as one to be led by Z, *if Z's own hand afforded better resource.* Z would, however, have led a diamond, as the only course open to him, and the trick would have gone to the enemy, as before, making their fifth. The enemy would then have led trumps, as before, to draw Z's last, though at the expense of using two for one; for this, right or wrong, was what they did in the actual game. Two rounds of clubs would then have been taken by A-B, as in the actual game, making eight tricks to them in all. But they would have made only one more trick, instead of three more as in the game actually played; for on B leading a club the trick would have gone to Y, and a diamond lead, giving one trick to A in diamonds, would have forced a heart lead from him, giving the two remaining tricks to Z, who remained with the major tenace in hearts. Thus the game, the players having been at love all, would have been saved by two points.

Now there is nothing striking about the play here considered. It is simply commonplace whist strategy, such as no one having the least *aperçu* of the game could possibly avoid. But it is in just such matters as these that the modern average player, trained to regard the signals and conventions as the essential points of whist strategy, constantly blunders. He plays and notes all the conventional signals; he follows unquestioningly all the suggestions of the books; he learns the leads and the discards as means of conveying information. But of whist strategy he knows nothing. Of the lead as directed to obtaining control or full command of a suit, of the discard as guided by the necessity of protecting the various suits, he has no conception whatever. He does not even know how he loses trick after trick, and with them rubber after rubber which might have been saved. He gives up the defence of a suit, and then considers the enemy had rare luck, or had displayed marvellous skill in getting possession of it. One-tenth of the attention he directs to conven-

tional matters, if directed instead to the essential points of whist strategy, would save him a point or two, on the average, in every rubber; but he knows nothing of this, and attributes to bad luck what is the direct and inevitable effect of bad strategy. For let it noticed that there is no more positive believer in the absurd superstitions associated with luck than your hopelessly bad player.

One of the most remarkable results of the signalling system, when thoroughly brought into vogue in a company of players of no exceptional strength, is the singular disproportion between the ability displayed in signalling and the power to make use of the knowledge obtained from signals. Your conventional player signals and counter-signals like Harlequin; but he is generally as helpless as Pantaloon to get any good from the knowledge he thus obtains. I recently asked a player, who thinks a good deal of his skill, why he signalled when strong in trumps. He answered readily, and rightly enough (though only parrot-like), 'Because I want my partner to know that I am strong in trumps, and that we ought to play a forward game.' When I asked, however, what he meant by a forward game, and what he considered the proper method of playing such a game, it appeared that his ideas were confused in the extreme. 'Oh, of course one knows what a forward game is; it means a game in which one tries to make a large number of tricks; my partner knows I have plenty of trumps, so that I can probably ruff one of the plain suits, if not two, and get extra tricks that way; or we may get a cross ruff; or—or—bring in a long suit—in fine, we may take advantage of our strength generally.' Is this too absurd to be believed? Ask ten players who fancy their whist, and are proud in their knowledge of all the signals, what is the proper way of utilising the information given by the signal, and seven out of the ten will talk just such nonsense. Nine out of ten who regard the Peter, the Echo, and the Penultimate (or original fourth) as the soul of the scientific game, show in actual practice that they think they have done all they need do when in response to the signal they have led trumps. Not quite so many, but at least one half of the ten are quite capable of the enormity of forcing their partner, trumps having been played for a round or two, after it has become clear that one of the enemy matches him in trump strength. A day or two since, watching a game which presented fine opportunities for strategy, I witnessed the following almost incredible proceedings:—A had responded to a Peter by his partner B, the round in which the signal was completed establishing A's suit,

originally a five-card one. Three rounds of trumps showed Z to be of equal trump strength numerically with B the signaller, each now retaining one trump, Z's the higher. Y led from a long suit, in which, after two rounds, it appeared that all the remaining strength lay between him and Z, who had three cards left in it, B having none. A had taken the last round in this suit, and now had to lead. If he had only led from his established suit, forcing Z, it was all up with Y-Z, whether Z yielded to the force at once or not. If Z would not yield to the force at all, three tricks went to A, who could then lead his partner's suit, which must be very strong since he had signalled and shown weakness in the two other plain suits. If Z yielded to the force, then either he must lead Y's suit or B's. If the former, B trumps, and A-B make all the remaining tricks; if the latter, A-B equally make all the remaining tricks. A-B would thus have made four by cards, and (as it chanced) the game, for they stood at 1 to love. What A actually did showed that the most marked skill in regard to whist conventions may be accompanied by utter ineptitude—one might almost say imbecility—in regard to whist strategy. He deliberately forced his partner by leading Y's suit! B had no choice but to yield to the fatal stroke of his partner, howsoever he may have wailed *Et tu Brute*, in his heart. For, if he had resisted, Y would have taken the trick, very properly playing his best in order to get out of Z's way, who, it appeared, had originally held five in that suit. Y would have led the suit again, and if B again passed the trick, Z would have taken it, drawn B's last trump, made another trick in his long suit, and the same evil would have resulted which actually befel A-B. B trumped then, and led his own suit, making two tricks in it; but then Z ruffed, led Y's suit, and though the hand did not result in Y-Z's favour, A-B's strength being overwhelming, A-B made only two by cards, instead of four as they would had A played correctly.

When B remonstrated with his partner, A replied in a way which even more clearly indicated his ignorance of whist strategy than his bad play itself. (For a man may play badly through carelessness; defended bad play is much more significant.) 'I saw your trump would fall to Z's,' he was good enough to explain, 'unless I gave you a chance of making it; so I led a suit which I knew you could ruff.' To enable B to make that one trick, A had spoiled the whole of B's strategy, and enabled Y-Z to save a lost game.

Here, again, a very simple point of whist strategy was in question; nor could it be said that the signalling system was responsible for the bad play shown by A. But no one can play much at whist in these days without recognising that attention to the conventionalities recently introduced has led to a marked falling off in regard to whist strategy, even in such simple matters as these. Men display the Peter or respond to it, and presently adopt a line of play the precise reverse of that which the Peter is intended to originate,—playing the strong hands as if they were weak ones, precisely as bad sailors make a foul wind of a fair one by false tacks.

Perhaps the most effective way of showing how the signalling system has injured the game regarded as a recreation, is by comparing what was expected from the Peter when it had recently been invented with what is now recognised as its natural effect. Clay, who, like all the finest players of his day, objected strongly to the introduction of the Blue Peter, remarked that the inventor of the signal ('he who claimed the credit, if there were any, of inventing the Peter') had expressed his belief that the invention had deprived him of half the advantage arising from his skill in whist strategy. That was a natural view to take at that time. The introduction of a simple signal for leading trumps, among a number of players accustomed to measure their strategic powers against each other without any such artificial assistance, seemed naturally a boon to the weaker players. For an essential quality of the strong whist player is the quick recognition of the proper time for opening trumps, either because of the strength of his own hand, or because he has felt that his partner's hand requires a trump lead. Repeatedly the weaker players in those times, when whist depended on skill in combination, not on mere attention to conventional signs, must have felt how effectively the superior insight of the stronger players told in this matter of opening trumps. Gladly they must have hailed the introduction of a system by which the weakest partner could be forced to see that trumps were wanted. And in this way, beyond a doubt, the signalling system helped the weaker players at that time.

But how does the matter stand now? So far from helping the weaker players, and making the game better because more even, the signalling system has given an immense pull to the stronger players over the weaker. And this in more ways than one.

In the first place, the weaker players are not content with responding to the Peter displayed by a partner who understands the strategy of the game. They display the signal at every

opportunity, good, bad, or indifferent, without possessing any sufficient insight into the principles of whist strategy to avail themselves of the advantage of getting the trump lead they signal for (supposing that by chance the trump lead really might be an advantage for their game). Or they adopt some cut-and-dried rule for signalling, such as Mr. Pole's rule (for beginners, too !) to signal always from five trumps, and are content to follow that rule without the least idea of the object supposed to be in view when trumps are opened early.

This is a serious mischief, of itself sufficing to make the signal injurious to the game of any but strong strategic whist-players. But this is far from being all.

For, in the second place, the admission of the Peter (which ought to have been stopped at the outset by a most rigid rule of whist etiquette—as imperative against signalling with small cards[1] as against kicking under the table) has led the way to a whole series of conventions and so-called developments of whist principles, the admitted purpose of which is to bring four-handed whist as close as possible to the double dummy game. Now anyone who has ever played much at double dummy knows that of all forms of whist this is the one which depends most on skill in whist strategy. So surely does such skill tell in double dummy, that the effect of chance seems entirely eliminated. If I am going to play for ten or twelve evenings at double dummy with an antagonist whose skill I have already gauged, I feel as certain what the result of the long series of games will be as though chance had no part even in single hands. Again and again I have tested the matter, and repeatedly with the same results,—against this player I win such and such a percentage, against that such and such another percentage; with A, I know the results will come out as nearly even as may be; with B, I know that I shall always in the long run have somewhat the worse. (For, be it understood, though a man may speak with just confidence on points of theory at whist, in actual play the long-continued practice of those with whom whist is not a recreation at all, but a business, tells effectively on the score. And *vice versâ*: Deschapelles would have beaten any living player at the table, but Deschapelles writing about whist could say nothing worth reading.) Since, then, double dummy depends more on skill than any other whist game, it is obvious that modern whist with a conventional

[1] The 'scare,' or play of a high card to scare the enemy into leading trumps, is of course a thoroughly legitimate piece of whist strategy. Indeed, one of the most unsatisfactory results of the introduction of the Peter has been the foiling of this effective stroke.

system directly intended to approximate the four-handed game double dummy, must depend more on skill than the older game in which signalling was unknown.

This is by no means saying that the game has been improved for precisely the same could be said if the modern game allows signals outside the play of the cards themselves. The game would be more difficult, slower, less recreative, if each player had his cards displayed face upwards before him. In fact, I may remark in passing, that whist thus played, though difficult, is a singularly fine game for those acquainted with the principles of whist strategy.

When we add to this the consideration that, with the signalling system, the weaker players are not only engaged in a more difficult game because of the approximation of the game to double dummy, but that this difficulty is enhanced by a heavy tax on the memory and attention, it will be admitted that they are more heavily handicapped now, when opposed to really fine players, than they were when the older game was played.

It is practically certain that the signalling system will not be checked by any rules (of *etiquette*, for no *laws* can be passed against it) making signalling an offence against whist manners. It is too profitable to the strong players; and whether playing for money or for love, the strong players will forego no advantage which may enhance their superiority. But the weaker players, and those among the strong who are generously disposed, are not without the means of checking the evil. Let them thoroughly master the signalling system (all but the 'echo in plain suits' which is simply chaotic), let them fall into the constant habit of noting it as played by the enemy (they will find this always useful, and learn rather to despise a method which helps their own play so much); but let them refrain from signalling themselves and constantly inform each partner they may play with, that, should *he* signal, he will only be enlightening the enemy, not advancing his or their game. I urge this as a course by which players of moderate strength may deprive the signalling system of more than half its mischievous effects, and yet enjoy their recreational rubber. For strong players matched against players of their own calibre, there is perhaps no other resource but to play the signalling system, difficult and wearisome though it may have made the game. It is not four-handed whist, as known to the finest players of old times, which is thus played, however, but an entirely different and much less attractive game.

RICHARD A. PROCTOR.

At Sunset.

I LOVE, when autumn days are done
  And all the winds at rest,
To sit and watch the happy sun
  Go out into the west;
To let my idle fancy stray
Across the waters' golden way;

To follow, follow, follow on
  Until the gleaming land
Has sunk beneath the waves and gone
  Like castles on the sand;
To follow till I gain at last
The charmèd country of the past.

There in the glamour of romance,
  By forest, plain, and hill,
With crested helm and glittering lance
  The knights are riding still,
And many a hoary castle wall
Echoes at eve their bugle-call.

There cruise the bearded buccaneers
  Who swept the Spanish main;
There gather to the feast of spears
  The ravens of the Dane,
And to the shining summer skies
The old sea-rovers' war-songs rise.

And there are low soft melodies
  About the shadowy shore,
Where the stars tremble on the seas
  Beneath the silent oar;
Music of lutes and serenade,
Sweet songs by happy lovers made.

There, clash of steel on steel, and shout
  Of battle wildly ring;
Granada's Moors are riding out
  To meet the Christian king,
And all the chivalry of Spain
Is fighting for the Cross again.

There by the glancing river's side,
  Out through the morning mists,
Gay lords and ladies laughing ride
  With hawks upon their wrists;
The soft winds bear across the fells
The music of their silver bells.

There, stretched the drowsy pines among,
  The Lotos-eaters be;
There still the sirens' fatal song
  Is sweet upon the sea,
And through the woodland and the stream
The nymphs and naiads glide and gleam.

The golden glow falls pale and dim
  Far in the western sky,
Where on the water's utmost rim
  The ships go sailing by.
That fair world fades away once more
And leaves me lonely by the shore.

D. J. ROBERTSON.

Little Selborne.

EVERY observer of nature has his favourite hunting ground. The edge of a wood skirting a road, along which his daily walk takes him, pleases one; another is contented with an old pear tree in the garden. A river's banks are a perpetual source of interest to almost every lover of the country. After all, it is not the locality so much as the eyes scanning it which furnish the perennial pleasures of a naturalist. No place is too bare for some kind of animal life in our islands; diligence and careful watching are sure to reward an observer even in the most unlikely-looking places for his game. The study of birds from a window is a great resource to an invalid. Our own Little Selborne runs for a quarter of a mile by the side of a brook in the dear, but alas! the tearful, West Country. This brook is mostly overhung by oaks and elms, with here and there mimic woods of alder, while a few birches and elders, pleasantly diversified with tufts of hemp agrimony and golden rod, furnish variety to the birds which love the water as well as the admiring eye of the passer-by. Wild flowers never flourish better than by such a stream. Here, each in its season, violets, mullein, and foxgloves, which an enlightened farmer would call weeds, abound everywhere. If agricultural depression possess any charms, it is to the lover of nature, and that because impecuniosity prevents farmers from ruthlessly cutting down hedges and stubbing up roots and wild flowers. Thanks to the prevailing depression, therefore, round this brook are fine plantations of flourishing thistles, the joy of finches, and of birdcatchers if such gentry were here allowed. On the hill above is a 'hanger' incomparably finer than its prototype in Gilbert White's parish as respects trees, these being old oaks, yews, and thorns for the most part, whereas the Selborne hanger is composed of beeches. Beeches, however, when they predominate in a landscape, give it the warm russet tints in autumn which are so consonant to the poetical descriptions of frost 'laying

his fiery finger' on the leaves and the like, and which render such a county as Bucks at that season so characteristically beautiful. A Comb Wood, such as White esteemed for its echoes, is on the right hand; indeed (as with White) 'the whole of this district is an Anathoth, a place of responsive echoes.' Especially is this noticeable when the pheasants are being shot in October. Then the roar and rattle of the fusillade is echoed and re-echoed from hill and wooded bluff all round. Here White's own lines are exactly reflected:

> Each rural sight, each sound, each smell, combine;
> The tinkling sheep bell or the breath of kine;
> The new-mown hay that scents the swelling breeze,
> Or cottage chimneys smoking through the trees.

He laments the scarcity of spires round the Hampshire Selborne, 'for such objects are very necessary ingredients in an elegant landscape;' but here not only is Eleanor of Provence's beautifully proportioned spire of Grosmont seen crowning the hill on which that village is built, but also the long curtain, tower, and stately chimney shaft of its erstwhile royal castle may be descried. Here, then, in our mimic Selborne,

> Nature's works the curious mind employ,
> Inspire a soothing melancholy joy;
> As fancy warms, a pleasing kind of pain
> Steals o'er the cheek and thrills the creeping vein.

Indeed, the Lilliputian copy excels the original, for White sorely missed water in his bird paradise; the brook here leaps and sparkles along with many a pool till at length it falls into the Monnow.

Not many quadrupeds are visible as a general rule in or around this delightful brook. Rabbits abound, but were sorely decimated by the great flood of May 1886, which entered the burrows and drowned old and young together. Unlike the hare, rabbits soon recover such a loss. The dormouse sleeps at the root of the hollow trees hereabouts, and we saw a water rat, which also had been floated out of its usual burrows, sheltering and terrified at the swelling waters as it sat on a stump afraid to launch out into the rushing stream. Many rats and rabbits are killed during floods in this district by loafers and boys. The former animals are seen floating and swimming in the swift currents, unable to land, and are soon knocked on the head; the latter run about on

the banks and are killed, as their burrows are submerged. Exactly twenty years ago that beautiful little animal, the marten, now becoming so scarce not in England only but also in Scotland, was last seen in the parish, running up and down the trees overhanging our Little Selborne. In 1878 one was trapped about four miles away, which is now in the British Museum, and another was seen crossing a little river by means of a fallen tree a mile off so lately as 1884, so that it may be trusted the marten is not wholly extinct in South Herefordshire. The last that was seen was carrying an unfortunate rat in its mouth.

Otters occasionally ramble up our brook from the river into which it flows, but it is always easier to find them in it. Only this summer two little ones were seen with their mother rolling over and over in the moonlight on the top of a deep pool. She was evidently teaching them how to catch fish, just as tigers are often seen in the Indian jungles showing their cubs how to kill. Once or twice a year otter hounds visit the river. On the only occasion when we went with them the proceedings resembled Hamlet without the hero, otter hunting because there was no otter. But the sport was excellent. To rise earlier than usual on a lovely August morning and ramble beside the banks of a river, diversified here by rapids, there by woods running down to it, and again by high cliffs and long gravel beds waving with the characteristic flowers of such a locality, to breathe fresh air and be met at every step by new prospects, while a pack of hounds splash therein incessantly in the water, and a number of eager people accompany them, each cheering and shouting and becoming highly excited if a hound does but give tongue upon some old 'spoor'—this is a spectacle and an occupation exceedingly grateful to the social philosopher. Nor is his pleasure a whit lessened because nothing is killed. It is still possible for him to indulge the hope that in the evening, as he quietly fishes along the windings of the river, at any corner he may come upon the old one with her cubs. And after all it is an infinitesimally small amount of mischief that a few otters do to a trout stream, probably nothing like the damage inflicted by the constant visits of the three or four herons usually found on the reaches of our river. Both bird and quadruped—(if we so decide the otter to be when a whole College of Carthusians doubted whether it be not rather fish)—both bird and quadruped feed by preference on eels if they can be obtained. Let the trout preserver, therefore, cease to molest the otter, and, paradox though it sounds, protect his eels if he would foster his trout.

From trout to crayfish the connection is but verbal, but it is worth noticing that in our brook it was that the crayfish, hitherto unknown in the district, was discovered. He is a bold man who would attempt to describe either this crustacean or its habits after Professor Huxley's excellent monograph on it. It is curious, when the variety of bird life round Little Selborne is taken into consideration, to remember how brief is the list of fishes in the Monnow. Salmon cannot ascend above the weir at Monmouth, but trout abound, and this last summer grayling, which a few years ago were placed in a tributary, have dropped down and made their appearance in the main river; chub swim sullenly in every deep hole, a perch or two and a gudgeon have been caught to testify to their presence in the Monnow, while every now and then the trout fishers in the upper waters tremble because a large pike is reported to be infesting their preserves. Probably the river contains dace too, but there the list appears to end. It is very different if the Trent be contrasted with it; in this river Drayton and Cotton assert there are thirty kinds of fish, and state that this is the origin of its name, Trent. Modern philology knows better, but it certainly holds many more distinct kinds of fish than does the Monnow. There are two or three neighbouring falls in this river caused by the end of a mill pond or the like. Up these in the end of October it is singular to see the trout rushing, and then throwing themselves in vain high out of the water if haply they may get above the obstacle. But all their efforts are fruitless until a freshet comes. In the mean time over and over again they are swept back by the foaming currents into the great pool at the bottom of such weirs and dams, like the soldiers who first tried to enter the breach at Badajoz.

But the great charm of Little Selborne consists, as with its prototype, in the birds which haunt it. Here the first willow wrens and wood wrens of the spring may be seen flitting in and out of the alders, and the swallows, their speedy successors, first dart up and down bringing summer on their wings. Even in winter a couple of water ouzels frequent the brook, some say in order that they may eat the spawn of the trout which breed there; but so characteristic of the locality are these pretty white-collared birds that these suspicions shall not be hinted to any trout preserver. The grey wagtail, too (*Motacilla boarula*), with its beautiful yellow plumage, haunts the stream in the winter months seemingly with his brood of last year. This family party enlivens our walks in the deadest period of the year. Last

summer the nest of a sandpiper (*Totanus hypoleucus*) was taken hard by with four eggs in it. One of the last buzzards caught in the district was trapped by means of a dead rabbit among the oaks here a year or two ago. Whatever may be the case with the common buzzard on the hillsides, it will not in captivity kill its own prey, thus justifying the poor opinion which our forefathers held of it as a hawk. One which we have kept for some months lives in perfect amity in a large shed with a couple of tame rabbits. The keeper is far too vigilant to allow many hawks hereabouts. The sparrowhawk and harmless kestrel pay frequent visits, however, and not far off we noticed a merlin in November, while a friend observed another a few miles off flying across his path with a hapless blackbird in its claws. Only the other day a sprightly company of some thirty goldfinches was flitting from thistle to thistle in the neighbouring field. How much of the bird life of the kingdom has been lost by high farming and over-preservation of game! Many districts have now become wildernesses so far as any save the commonest of birds are concerned. Still, in autumn the robin sits here despondently among the dripping sprays. Would you know the reason of his sadness? Every autumn, according to a rustic interviewed close at hand, the young robins kill off their parents. 'You may see the old ones sitting despondent,' he added, 'at such times because they know their time is come, and after a time they will be found dead under the hedges.' On our venturing to suggest that cats might have killed them, he allowed it might be so, but (happy thought) 'it could not be cats, sir, or else they would have eaten the birds.' A few years ago the redbreast was the most popular of British birds, and neither Christmas card nor Christmas carol was *en règle* if it did not possess some reference to this winter favourite. There is something of a reaction now setting in. Without espousing the article of Herefordshire folklore given above, it is yet certain that the redbreast is a morose and quarrelsome bird. It lives in the woods and fields most of the summer and autumn, and comes to our doors only when necessity compels it. Long ago White of Selborne remarked too that, 'notwithstanding the prejudices in their favour, redbreasts do much mischief in gardens to the summer fruits.'[1]

Wood pigeons abound near the brook, feeding on the acorns under the oaks in large companies, and roosting in a wood opposite. In spring the pretty turtle dove appears, but does not seem

[1] *Selborne*, p. 81, ed. Sir Wm. Jardine, 1853.

to tarry long in the district. The redbacked shrike is a summer visitor, and breeds here. Indeed, all through the hot months a cloud of small birds is flying round our Little Selborne, hovering above, singing and twittering beneath, until the observer thinks that if he worked here for a century he would never learn to discriminate each and know the varied idiosyncrasies of all. There are plenty of apple trees in an orchard close at hand with mistletoe growing profusely upon them; the hawthorns and white poplars which abound are many of them hung with it. The hedgehogs by the brook, according to the folklore of the district, obtain apples by rolling on them and carrying them off on their spines. Magpies, thanks to game preservation, are seldom seen here. There are two kinds of them, as says here popular belief. One kind builds in high trees, the other in hawthorn bushes, and only these if taken young can ever be taught to speak. Even then they require to be kept for two years. The folklore of the district about wild creatures is copious. It is curious that much of it yet retains its vitality, and that these should be chiefly superstitions which will not for a moment bear the test of experience. Thus, the adder is far from uncommon in the neighbourhood, and yet the sages of Little Selborne gravely affirm, as if books and board schools had no existence around them, that if a man runs a thorn into his finger, the skin of an adder put on the opposite side of the finger will drive it out, but if applied over the thorn it will at once drive it farther in. It is asserted, too, that a certain cure against cramp is to bind an eel skin round each knee.

When moonlight is dappled around the brook by the dark shades of the oaks, no more appropriate spot for a fairies' revel could be imagined, and yet the little folk have not been seen here. Two miles off, however, is a meadow famous for their dancings on summer eves. An old woman, lately dead, had often heard their merriment and the sound of their elfin music, and on visiting the mead next day was sure to find the grass trampled down by them in circles. Witches frequently ride horses left in the fields here at night. In the morning the poor animals are covered with perspiration and foam flakes, and tremble violently. If their manes be then examined, some locks will be found curiously twisted together. These are the 'witches' stirrups;' they cannot be untied, and can only be cut by the aid of steel. It is impossible to comb them out. The most fearsome, however, of all nocturnal visitants is Will-o'-the-Wisp, and this apparition has been often observed by the side of the brook. The popular belief

is, that if the person who sees it does not at once lay hold of some solid substance, he will be drawn onwards by Will and perhaps drowned. 'I have seen it once,' said a stout young fellow, 'and I instantly caught hold of the gate and was safe.'

The beauty of Little Selborne's vegetation, its abundance of wildings, and the luxuriance of its tree life, remind the classical scholar of nothing so much as the scenery around Calypso's dwelling—the cave where the 'well-tressed' goddess, beside a fire of fragrant cedar chips and sandal wood, sang with sweet voice as she plied her golden shuttle. And all around was a wood of alder and poplar and sweet-smelling cypress, where many long-winged birds flew, owls and hawks and chattering crows. It would not be hard also to find here the four founts bubbling over with white water, round which extended soft meads, all violets and parsley, 'where, indeed, even an immortal, were he to stray, would rejoice at the prospect and be delighted in his heart.' Of course, for abundant and luxurious vegetation, low ground rather than high must be sought. Homer admires the hills, but loves low-lying grounds with a poet's eye for their tangled shrubs and flowers. So it is that his beautiful descriptions rush into the mind near Little Selborne. The plane tree at Aulis, and the spring of fresh water gushing from its roots, the asphodel mead of Hades, the galingale and lotus of Sparta, the crocus and hyacinth of Zeus's nuptial couch—these or their analogues are reproduced in this low well-sheltered meadow, as we find them in the imperishable verses of the old blind poet. Where the river receives the brook, may be viewed in miniature the landscape seen in Cyclops' island, as translated by P. S. Worsley, alas! too soon removed from earth:

> Fast by the margin of the hoary deep
> Lie soft well-watered meadows. There the vine
> Would bloom for ever. If to plough and reap,
> Observant of the hours, one's heart incline,
> Black with fertility the soil doth shine.
> Smooth is the haven, nor is need at all
> Of anchor, cable, and shore-fastened line.
> Floating in shelter of that firm sea wall,
> Sailors at will may rest till prosperous breezes call.

It is this juxtaposition of ancient and nineteenth century beauty which charms the mind here, and bids it bless the magical power of association.

Both the glow- and the slow-worm, creatures widely different, may be found in the sward. Justly as the poets have praised the former, words do but faint justice to its soft green lambent flame. Familiarity never enables those who have no special taste for snake and serpent life to look with equanimity upon the innocent blind worm. Country folk too often ruthlessly destroy it. Several were caught and put in a cucumber frame, and of course the gardener considered himself absolved when the plants did badly and the cucumbers were small and limited; 'them nasty snakes had sucked away the earth from the plants' roots.' Squirrels play up and down the trees overhanging the brook throughout the year. Hibernation with them must be very partial. Even with snow on the ground we have seen two skipping over it, and running up and down their favourite trees. The popular stories of most natural history works require to be considerably amended about the squirrel's winter economy. Only in extremely cold weather can the creature properly be said to hibernate.

One of the most interesting of river birds is the water ouzel (*Cinclus aquaticus*), known here in Herefordshire as the 'water blackbird.' It remains with us throughout the year, and may be heard singing in the sunny gleams of winter, from its boulder jutting out of the foam in the stream, as briskly as during summer. It must be a very hardy bird, and we have seen it plunge into the water and fish under a long current on an icy cold day with perfect indifference. Its food is supposed to consist entirely of water beetles, the *larvæ* of dragon flies, mayflies, caddis worms, and the like. Many trout fishers execrate and shoot the poor dipper, but we believe that trout spawn has never been found within a dipper, while the creatures which it does eat are many of them destructive to spawn. In many parts of the country the dipper is never seen, but in all hilly and wooded districts as it flies up and down the stream it lends a fresh interest in it to the soothing rush of running water.

Little Selborne is highly favoured by Flora. In spring there are 'primrose habitations' everywhere along the brook and by the hedgerows. *Campanula patula*, not a common but a beautiful blossom, abounds in summer. Earlier in the year, blue hyacinths, every here and there variegated by a few white blossoms, are abundant, while the pretty mauve-coloured blooms of meadow saffron delight the artist and disgust the farmer. It is a very dangerous plant to cattle. Eglantines and briars reach down from the higher banks and trail over the water, or clasp

he neighbouring boughs for support. It may easily be conceived hat these ivy-hung bowers form a paradise for a naturalist. He eldom passes by without noting some bird or learning a little nore of Nature's wise economy. His notes may not, indeed, attain the dignity of print and advance the cause of science, but they furnish him with an all-absorbing hobby, and provide much content and quiet happiness. Here, as elsewhere, the eye must first bring to the view something in itself; some taste for birds and flowers must be inherent in a man if these common sights and sounds of the country are to delight him. Country parsons, doctors, and all whose duties call them to rustic shades, should cultivate these placid tastes and this unruffled contemplation. It is wise to be dependent upon such simple pleasures for recreation, especially after the meridian of life is passed. Herein White and Walton have deserved well of their fellow-countrymen. They have shown what engrossing and perennial delights proceed from the exercise of energies on the familiar objects naturally suited for them, and taught that it is possible to enjoy country life without nursing the luxury of Nero and the ambition of Alexander dissatisfied with only one world to conquer. People do not sufficiently bear in mind that those who increase the stock of simple pleasures which can be easily obtained are the true benefactors of their fellow-men. And so the 'Compleat Angler' and Gilbert White's placid wisdom will be read when the highly flavoured romances of the age shall have completely perished from the earth.

M. G. WATKINS.

At the Sign of the Ship.

THE amusement of drawing up imaginary lists of an imaginary Academy was invented, perhaps, by Mr. Matthew Arnold. Some members of the British Public have lately tried their hand at it—their hands already expert at making amateur Cabinets, ideal Elevens of All England, lists of the best places to buy groceries at, of the best schools, the best doctors, the best parsons, and so forth. The discussion is perfectly harmless, and with the aid of the names of writers on the covers of the *Nineteenth Century*, considerable excellence may be attained in the sport of Academy-making. But the game, as at present played, is not conducted with the rigour of the game. The sportsmen put down the names of people who, they think, should belong to an Academy, if we were cursed with such an Institution. But the true sport would be to mention the names of the persons who would be among the Immortals if we had possessed (or been possessed by) an Academy as long as the French have endured theirs. If the educated public could vote for forty painters to be made R.A.'s, how many of the names of the actual Forty would be found in the list? Not many, I fancy. Nor would many of the names of persons of letters, such as the ladies who rejoice in these competitions delight to honour, be found in a real, self-elected Academy. There would be plenty of literary lords, plenty of bishops, plenty of popular preachers, plenty of statesmen, plenty of men of science, of world-wide reputation, whom you and I never heard the names of in our days. And there would be various well-connected and well-meaning mediocrities, and the working-men of the pen and the lamp would be howling and gnashing their teeth outside the English Academy. But I think a few classical scholars, real scholars, men the public never hears of, would be on the right side of the door, for all things have their compensations, and even an Academy would not be an evil absolutely unadulterated.

* * *

Among the complaints and murmurs of the learned, it is a comfort to come across an Author perfectly satisfied with his Publisher, Printer, Paper-maker, and with himself. Such an Author was Ménage, or Ægidius Menagius, as he called himself (being a *savant en us*) on the title-page of

ÆGIDII MENAGII

POËMATA.

QUARTA EDITIO

Auctior et emendatior,

AMSTELODAMI,
Ex officina Elzeviriana.
M. DC. LXIII.

This good little chirpy Pedant (perhaps, as Pascal says, only Pedants use the word Pedant, so let us say) this good little literary man wrote a poem

AD

DANIELEM ELZEVIRIUM

BIBLIOPOLAM AMSTELODAMENSEM.

I marvel that Mr. Brander Matthews did not translate the hendecasyllabics for his *Ballads of Books*. Here is a rude attempt at a version.

TO DANIEL ELZEVIR.

What do I see! Oh Gods divine
And Goddesses,—this Book of mine,—
This child of many hopes and fears,—
Is published by the Elzevirs!
Oh perfect Publishers complete!
Oh dainty volume, new and neat!
The Paper doth outshine the snow,
The Print is blacker than the crow,
The Title-Page, with crimson bright,
The vellum cover smooth and white,
All sorts of readers do invite,
Ay, and will keep them reading still,
Against their will, or with their will!
Thus what of grace the Rhymes may lack
The Publisher has given them back,

As Milliners adorn the fair
Whose charms are something skimp and spare.

Oh *dulce decus*, Elzevirs!
The pride of dead and dawning years.
How can a poet best repay
The debt he owes your House to-day?
May this round world, while aught endures,
Applaud, and buy, these books of yours!
May purchasers incessant pop,
My Elzevirs, within your shop,
And learned bards salute, with cheers,
The volumes of the Elzevirs,
Till your renown fills earth and sky,
Till men forget the Stephani,
And all that Aldus wrought, and all
Turnebus sold in shop or stall,
While still may Fate's (and Binders') shears
Respect, and spare, the Elzevirs!

I added the last two lines out of my own head: the original ends thus:—

sic decus Elzevirianum
Doctorum volitans per ora vatum,
Terras impleat, impleatque cœlum.
Turnebos simul atque Vascosanos
Et vincas Stephanos, Manutiosque!

* * *

Turning over the books at the sale of Baron de Seillière's Library (ah, what a library—not a book anyone wants to read, and almost all in splendid bindings!), I came on Colletet's 'Epigrammes: avec un discours de l'Epigramme,' 8vo. Paris: J. B. Loyson, 1653. Opening this I encountered Colletet's address to his library, also not unworthy of a place in *Ballads of Books*. The volume seems to be rare, and I give the epigram.

A MES LIVRES.

Cheres delices de mon ame,
Gardez-vous bien de me quitter,
Quoiqu'on vienne vous emprunter,
Chacun de vous m'est une femme,
Qui peut se faire voir sans blame,
Et ne se doit jamais prester.

My Books, my heart's delight, beware
Of quitting the domestic shelves!
I say when folk would bid me lend,
'My books are wives to me, my friend;
You may admire them, if you care;
But no, they never lend themselves!'

* * *

Colletet was of Charles Nodier's mind:

Tel est le triste sort de tout livre prêté;
Souvent il est perdu, toujours il est gâté!

Such is the fate of borrowed books: they're lost,
Or not the Book returneth, but its Ghost!

* * *

The following poem I confess that I did not understand without the aid of some comments by the author, who was kind enough to act as her own scholiast. You must know that in this (visibly imperfect) world we are living in space of Three Dimensions. I thought it was *four*, not being scientific myself, but Miss May Kendall says *three*, and mathematical people almost unanimously confirm her statement. Very well, life in Three-dimensioned space being undeniably rather a failure, it is presumed that people who live in Four-dimensioned space are perfectly happy, and find everything for the best in the best of worlds. The poem describes the dream of a dweller in that heavenly country, who gains a vision of our 'one-horse' and three-dimensioned planet. The dreamer describes our miserable condition to his lady, in a land where all love is true love, and the course of true love always does run smooth. *We* cannot conceive such a state of things, and he finds it equally hard to describe a world all at sixes and sevens, like ours.

* * *

A PURE HYPOTHESIS.

Ah, love, the teacher we decried,
  That erudite professor grim,
In mathematics drenched and dyed,
  Too hastily we scouted him.
He said: 'The bounds of Time and Space,
  The categories we revere,
May be in quite another case
  In quite another sphere,'

He told us: 'Science can conceive
  A race whose feeble comprehension
Can't be persuaded to believe
  That there exists our Fourth Dimension,
Whom Time and Space for ever baulk;
  But of these beings incomplete,
Whether upon their heads they walk
  Or stand upon their feet—

We cannot tell, we do not know,
  Imagination stops confounded;
We can but say "It *may* be so,"
  To every theory propounded.'
Too glad were we in this our scheme
  Of things, his notions to embrace,—
But—I have dreamed an awful dream
  Of *Three-dimensioned* Space!

I dreamed—the horror seemed to stun
  My logical perception strong,
That everything beneath the sun
  Was *so unutterably wrong.*
I thought—what words can I command?—
  That nothing ever did come right.
No wonder *you* can't understand:
  I could not, till last night!

I would not, if I could, recall
  The horror of those novel heavens,
Where Present, Past, and Future all
  Appeared at sixes and at sevens,
Where Capital and Labour fought,
  And, in the nightmare of the mind,
No contradictories were thought
  As truthfully combined!

Nay, in that dream-distorted clime,
  These fatal wilds I wandered through,
The boundaries of Space and Time
  Had got most frightfully askew.
'What *is* "askew"?' my love, you cry;
  I cannot answer, can't portray;
A universe that's all awry
  No language can convey.

I can't tell what my words denote,
  I know not what my phrases mean;
Inexplicable terrors float
  Before this spirit once serene.
Ah, what if on some lurid star
  There should exist a hapless race,
Who live and love, who think and are,
  In Three-dimensioned Space!

M. K.

It is, indeed, a melancholy vision, and perhaps contains as good an explanation as another of the Origin of Evil. According to a geometrical enthusiast, it is only by 'the casting out of self' that we can even conceive of Four-dimensioned Space, and, if mankind could universally cast out self, how happy we might all become! But what a terrible planet that would be which was peopled (like Ulster) by 'an evil colony' of our expelled selves—a colony of Mr. Hydes!

* * *

To return from this excursion into the unexplored regions of Moral Mathematics, what a delightful writer on books does France possess in M. Henri Beraldi! Neither the late Mr. John Hill Burton, nor the 'dreadful Dibdin,' as an American amateur calls him, had even the beginnings of such a pleasant style of *causerie* as M. Henri Beraldi. Happy are the book-men who possess his rare little volume, *Bibliothèque d'un Bibliophile*; happier they who have his *Mes Estampes*, of which M. Conquet has just published another hundred, for the joy of Pantagruelists, *et non aultres*. M. Beraldi's catalogue of his engravings includes illustrated books—and anecdotes. The most astonishing of all sales of engravings, he says, was that of M. W——, a Government office clerk, in 1880. M. W—— collected, here and there, and picked up what cheap curiosities came in his way. The time came when he was superannuated, and then he thought of selling his engravings. He had paid about 150*l.* or 200*l.* for the lot. They were sent to the auction room, and fetched over 4,000*l.* Here was an investment, and an investment which it was pleasant as well as profitable to make. M. Beraldi mentions a book for which he declined to give 250 francs in 1872, and presently found himself buying for 4,000, so rapidly did prices rise when prosperity returned after the war. He bought, however, more than a hundred examples of Moreau's work in beautiful 'states'

for 250 francs, an amazing piece of good fortune; but the 1,500 francs had to be paid for the few last pieces wanted to make up the set. M. Beraldi raises a point of casuistry. If a man who cannot read offered you a lot of railway shares for a few pounds, you would, of course, tell him to get the proper price at the Stock Exchange. But if a poor cheap bookseller offers you a marvel of scarcity for five shillings, why—you generally take him at his word. A bookseller once told me, when I said some bargain was too good, that only one other buyer had ever offered to pay a higher price than that charged. Probably nine readers out of ten will guess the name of that despiser of political economy. But I doubt if this kind of unscientific readiness to give a fair price is so very rare. Happily one is seldom, or never, tempted. Besides, the seller has made his percentage of profit, and is apparently, glad to let his customers have a bargain now and then. It encourages them. And in these late days, when everything is collected, we are so seldom encouraged. M. Beraldi's book contains a picture in words of that famed and ill-famed English collector, lately dead, who made Paris his home, and of whom it is said that even the booksellers *le recevaient sans enthousiasme.* To a humble looker-on at those great epic battles of the auction room it is pleasant to find that M. Beraldi does not disdain books bound by Simier, Thouvenin, and Bozérian. An American amateur and critic pities me for once having called them great binders. What was good enough for Charles Nodier, and is good enough for M. Beraldi, is good enough for me. But people have become so fastidious about bindings, above all so fanatically devoted to the memory of Trautz, that M. Beraldi thinks it sagacious to have books merely *cartonnés.* Otherwise your friends have each his peck at the tooling, gilding, back, sides, edges, and the rest of it.

* * *

How long it takes a foreign author, especially if he is not a 'naturalistic' novelist, to get a hearing from an alien public! People often doubt whether critics are of any use for any purpose; their apologist might maintain that, at least, they can sometimes introduce new foreign authors to the domestic public. France gives us few better things than her critics, with their delicacy, wit, probity, learning, and respect for the profession which we perhaps respect too little. Since Sainte-Beuve ceased to charm us once a week, France has had no better critic than M. Jules Lemaître. His essays are published in volumes, *Les Contemporains,* of which the third has just appeared. The *Athenæum*

dismisses this admirable volume in four lines, as a collection of biographies of contemporary novelists! Who could guess that Gaston Paris is a contemporary novelist? To him M. Lemaître's most valuable study is dedicated, among others on M. Richepin, the Goncourts, M. Soulary, the Duc d'Aumale, M. Bourget, and so forth. But it is M. Lemaître's note on the *Ballade* (vol. i. p. 19) that I wish to borrow, for a purpose, to-day.

* * *

'The poet who begins a ballade,' says M. Lemaître, 'does not know very exactly what he will put into it: the Rhyme, and nothing but the Rhyme, will whisper things unexpected and charming, things he would never have thought of but for her, things with strange and remote relations to each other, all united in the disorder of a dream. Nothing, indeed, is richer in suggestion than the strict laws of these difficult pieces; they force the fancy to wander afield, hunting high and low, and while she seeks through all the world the foot that can wear Cinderella's slipper, she makes delightful discoveries by the way.'

* * *

M. Lemaître's good-humoured appreciation of the Ballade may serve as introduction to a ballade of Mr. Clinton Scollard's, a young American poet, whose Alma Mater is Harvard. I copy it from a pleasant book, *With Reed and Lyre*, published by Messrs. Lothrop, of Boston. There are greater things in it than what follows; for example, a delightful little *Orientale* (M. Lemaître, by a coincidence, has written a volume named *Petites Orientales*), 'As I came down from Lebanon.' Here followeth Mr. Clinton Scollard's

FOR ME THE BLITHE BALLADE.

Of all the songs that dwell
  Where softest speech doth flow,
Some love the sweet rondel,
  And some the bright rondeau.
  With rhymes that tripping go,
In mirthful measures clad;
  But would I choose them?—no,
For me the blithe Ballade!

O'er some the villanelle,
  That sets the heart aglow,
Doth its enchanting spell
  With lines recurring throw;

Some weighed with wasting woe
Gay triolets make glad;
But would I choose them ?—no,
For me the blithe Ballade!

On *Chant* with stately swell
With measured feet and slow,
As grave as minster bell
At vesper tolling low,
Do some their praise bestow;
Some on *sestinas* sad;
But would I choose them ?—no,
For me the blithe Ballade!

ENVOY.

Prince, to these songs a-row,
The Muse might endless add,
But would I choose them ?—no,
For me the blithe Ballade!

One might wish more variety in the penultimate line of each stanza, which here is part of the refrain; but the whole thing is pretty and ingenious, and the author can write more seriously in other moods and measures.

A. LANG.

The 'Donna.'

THE EDITOR begs to acknowledge the receipt of the following contributions:—M. L. L. M. 5*s*. M. J. G. M. 7*s*. 6*d*. A. M. C. 1*l*. Oatlands A. C., A. C., E. B., and J. C., 3*s*. 6*d*. A few readers of *Longman's Magazine*, per J. W. Unwin, 17*s*. E. Jerseyn 14*s*. Annie Jeston 21*s*. Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, 5*s*. S. Hall 20*s*. Edith 10*s*. M. and G. F. 2*l*. 2*s*. T. C. and Friends 5*s*. Better Late than Never 21*s*. Fred Melfort 21*s*. Collected by C. R. 12*s*. 6*d*. T. B. S. Sidmouth 5*s*. E. 10*s*. Mrs. Thompson 10*s*. C. M. 5*s*. P. E. G. 2*s*. 6*d*. A. C. 1*s*. M. H. and A. C. (Donna) 2*l*. 10*s*. (Workroom) 2*l*. 10*s*. S. B. H. 10*s*. Aught 10*s*. Miss Aline Crompton Stansfield (Workroom) 1*l*. Miss Stanhope 10*s*. R. C. C. 5*s*. A few Officers of H.M.S. *Tamar* 2*l*. B. C. C. 2*s*. and a woollen comforter.

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